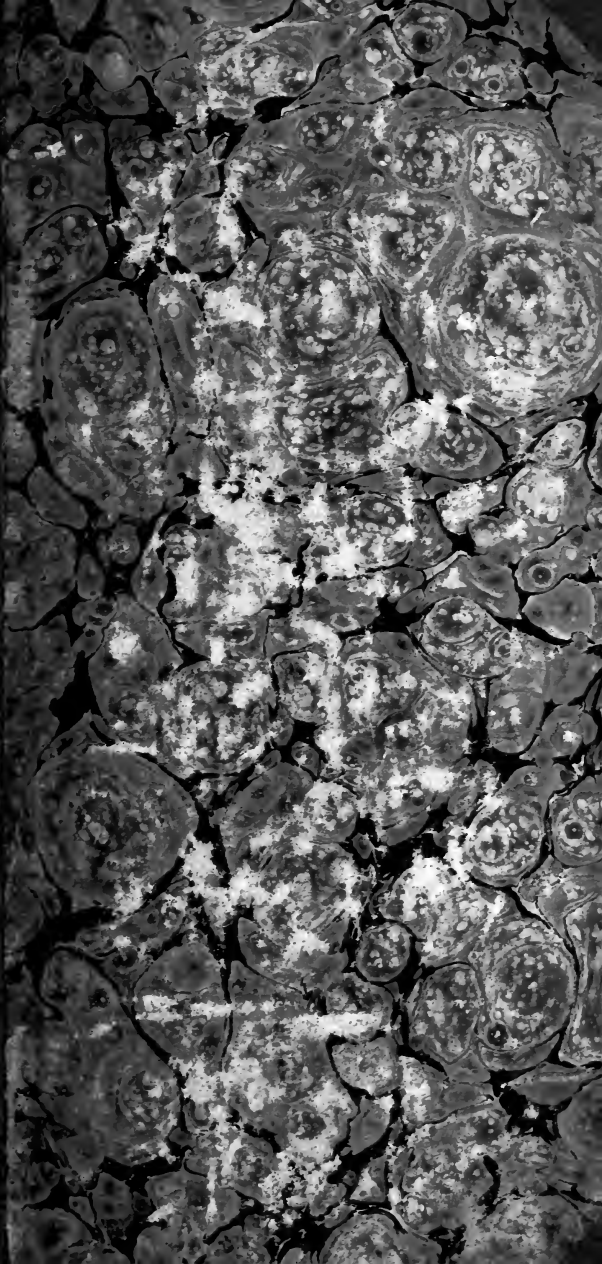


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THE
KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN,
A Romance,

BY MISS ANNA MARIA PORTER,
AUTHOR OF "THE RECLUSE OF NORWAY," &c. &c. &c.

————— "We, ignorant of ourselves,
" Beg often our own harms, which the wise Powers
" Deny us, for our good."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
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THE
KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

GIOVANNI had no sooner left Genoa than Cesario hastened to begin his meditated experiment upon Beatrice's affection. Not that he wanted proof of it, for himself: the alarm his friend's suspicion had conjured up, was already vanished. He had reflected, again and again, upon all his past intercourse with Beatrice, till imagination and memory combined, presented him with such overwhelming testimonies of almost public preference from her; that, whatever trifles testified differently, were cast from the scale.

Reflection has usually a very different effect upon the delusions of love than upon those of other passions: it increases, rather than diminishes them. But when we love, is it our reason, or our imagination, that decides?

By a most violent effort over himself, he refrained from her society a whole day; then wrote her a few confused lines to say he was going a short journey, and could not see her ere he went. In this note, he gave no account of whither he went, or why he was going; nor did he fix the period of his return. The instant it was dispatched, he threw himself upon his horse, and went where chance impelled him.

After a week spent in aimless, cheerless wandering, he returned pale with bodily fatigue, and worn with anxiety. Now, believing he would find Beatrice too enraptured at his return, to chide his silence and his stay; now, fearing that her just resentment would already have

extinguished her attachment, he hastened, with the utmost agitation, to the Syndic's.

On questioning his servant, he found that neither message nor letter waited him from the Signora Brignoletti. She had duly received the billet he had written, and that had satisfied her ! She had not been distressed then, by the mysteriousness of his departure, nor by his silence during his absence !

Cesario felt his heart die within him, at this information. With difficulty he reached his apartment, where he threw himself into a seat in a state of stupefaction.

He had believed himself prepared for some shew of resentment from Beatrice ; he had expected some petulant message, or letter ; some rebuke through the Signora Calva : but for this petrifying indifference, he was not prepared ; and it threw all his faculties into disorder.

He held a letter from Giovanni long in his hand, unopened : then he opened,

and read it — but he might as well have looked on vacancy ; his mind took no cognisance of its contents.

Hour after hour passed, without giving order to his thoughts. Fluctuating between resentment and misery, sometimes he resolved to seek Beatrice, and reproach her ; then, thrilling with momentary anger, he determined, rather to lose his senses, than let her know the extent of a love she repaid so inadequately.

Fortunately for him, the good Syndic and his wife were absent from their home ; his disturbance, therefore, had no witness.

He was still sitting in his solitary apartment, dubious what to do, and execrating his own folly, when his servant hurried into the room, announcing Signor Calva. The Signor checked himself, till the servant had retired ; then glancing over Cesario's harassed and haggard looks, exclaimed, with great perturbation,

“ What has really happened? — Has the Signora Beatrice guessed — ” “ What of Beatrice ? ” interrupted Cesario, joy flushing his face at the mere sound of a name so beloved,

Signor Calva hastened to explain. — How did that explanation heal and revive the bleeding heart of the lover !

Beatrice, he said, had been that night of the Signora Calva’s party to the opera ; when a story was circulated, which wanted only the names of Cesario and Giovanni to render mortal to her.

It was said, that two travellers, with a single attendant, had been attacked in the woods near Noli, by banditti ; that one of them had fallen ; and that his friend, and servant, in trying to rescue his body, were desperately wounded.

The wounded persons had been afterwards found by some military, who conveyed them to the adjacent town, where their wounds were dressed. The servant, however, expired under the sur-

geon's hands; but the other having recovered, had announced himself and his murdered companion as natives of Genoa.

The circumstance of their being attended only by one servant, was explained thus: the surviving gentleman had but just joined his friend, on a matter of temporary business; and that discussed, he was about to return home again when they were surprised by the robbers.

The age, the figures, the circumstances of these travellers, (for Giovanni was to go from Noli to Marseilles by sea,) all pointed to Giovanni and Cesario; and the sudden departure of the latter, with his silence since, made the supposition certain in the mind of Beatrice.

She had fallen into the most terrifying fits, upon hearing this frightful relation; and was then at the house of Signora Calva, raving alternately of her lover and of his friend.

The only rational words she had spoken

since the affair, was an entreaty that Signor Calva would hasten to Cesario's residence, and Giovanni's, and learn what had been heard of them there.

"How, beyond my hopes, was it, to find yourself!" explained the Signor, as he hurried along the streets with the impatient, the agonised, yet the overjoyed lover.

Cesario rushed into the room, whence issued the sound of Beatrice's agitated voice — he threw himself at her feet, as she lay sobbing on the bosom of the Signora Calva.

"Cesario!" she shrieked out, "Cesario!" starting up as she spoke, "but where — where is your friend?"

"My own Beatrice!" burst rapturously from the lover's lips, as he fondly fancied her interest in Giovanni but a sympathy with all *his* powerful affections. "Our Giovanni is safe—is well.—This letter from him."—

Beatrice extended her hand with a

look of wild joy, to snatch the letter he offered, but ere she could do so, she fainted on his neck.

Signor Calva, who was observing the scene, started—eyed her unbreathing figure for a moment or two in silent displeasure ; then, with a significant “hum !” abruptly quitted the room.

Whatever was the suspicion which had darted through his mind, it touched not that of Cesario ; for, to him, every thing appeared bliss-confirming ; and as he pressed the pale face of Beatrice against his, while the Signora Calva sought to revive her by essences, and assiduities, he forgot to aid those assiduities, but remained fondly, blissfully gazing on her.

At length her quivering eyelids, and a few short breathings, announced returning life : the Signora gently withdrew her hand from the head of Beatrice, and smiling kindly on Cesario, left them together.

All Beatrice’s first enquiries and ex-

clamations were incoherent: they were uttered with such rapidity and wildness; with such a mixture of transport, and terror; with so many tears, so many embraces; in such a distraction of spirit, in short, that Cesario might as well have pretended to describe the figures of so many lightning-flashes, as have remembered what she said and did during the first moments of explanation.

The letter he shewed her from Giovanni, was dated from a very different place than the scene of assassination; and being of a later date than that assigned to this horrid affair, completely disproved its connection with him.

Her expression of joy after reading it, was so earnest and so delightful to Cesario, that he scarcely knew how to persevere in what had always been his intention; namely, to tell her the reason of the experiment he had made upon a heart, his devoted one had never doubted.

Sincerity was, however, the code of Cesario's life ; and hesitating but an instant, he frankly confessed the trial he had made of her affection, (which accident only had rendered so painful,) and the scepticism of Giovanni, which it was intended to vanquish. Fortunately for Beatrice, Cesario had cast down his humbled eye, while making this confession ; so that her blush—and how deep was that blush ! escaped his notice.

She knew not whether to admit this account of Giovanni's observations on her decreasing attachment to his friend as a proof of her dangerous influence over himself ; or simply as a proof of his unswerving fidelity to his friend : but, at all events, her policy now was to hide from Cesario the emotion it caused in her.

She did not reply for some time : at length, with a smile of thrilling sweetness, she said, " I *can* be *angry* with you Cesario, but not *indifferent*. I *was* angry

at your abrupt, unexplained absence ; and I would not bend to enquire the reason of it ; but when I heard that horrid story—when I fancied——” She stopt, blushed ; and hiding her conscious face, in very confusion pressed his hand to her heart.

The rapture which followed from Cesario need not be described : he believed himself in possession of the whole heart of her he loved, believed also, that he had discovered in that heart all the sensibility it once seemed to want ; and she fluttered between the hope of attaching a new lover, and the necessity of blinding an old one.

From that night, Cesario spoke of his friend to her with complete confidence. He lamented with her, Giovanni’s early disappointment, and its supposed effect, of rendering him too doubtful of female stability ; and he exulted with her over his triumph, and Giovanni’s recantation.

Meanwhile, Beatrice felt much, and

reflected little. How often did she turn away with the weariness of satiety from the vivid looks and manners of Cesario ; asking herself how she could ever have found a charm in aught but the heavenly calm of his friend's countenance.

That magnificence of stature and proportion which distinguished Giovanni's appearance from that of all other men, seemed to her the only character of figure worthy the name of manly beauty ; and that soft, but resolute sway which he exercised over himself and others, appeared to her the only mental attribute before which her spirit could now willingly bend.

Cesario's lighter graces of person, and lustre of expression, ceased to charm her eyes ; his sensibility, his eloquence, his exhaustless fertility of fancy, all ceased to interest her heart ; because—she had ceased to love him !

She was, besides, growing weary of all the persons and pleasures by which

she was courted ; and that, because every pleasure was attainable to her, and every associate subservient. Her fickleness wanted novelty ; her active spirit, difficulty. She was continually imagining the glory, and gratification, of subduing Giovanni's prejudices against her sex ; and of seeing him at her feet : sometimes she even fancied, that to win his love, she could change her nature, and become all he admired.

Vain fancy ! Beatrice knew not her own heart : she knew not that she loved Giovanni as she had loved Cesario ; as a child desires a toy ; covets it, — fights for it, — struggles the harder the stouter it is withheld, — gains it, sees another, drops the first, and goes over the same contest for the second.

On the night of Giovanni's departure, she had wept till morning ; precisely as she had done, when Cesario broke his appointment in the Rosso gardens : but the next day, she began to imagine

all that he would do and say when he returned ; and, hoping every thing she wished, because all things hitherto had bent to her will, she became again accessible to pleasure, and diffusive of gaiety.

More enchanted than ever with his fair mistress, Cesario yielded up his soul to happiness: again his sky was cloudless, and his path through Elysium. His last gallant enterprise had not only obtained the public thanks of the Seigniory, but procured him a more flattering testimony.

In gratitude for the service rendered to so many of his subjects, the Grand Duke of Tuscany conferred on him the order of the Star ; accompanying a brilliant collar of the Order, with a letter written in his own hand.

This distinction was not without its fruit : it conferred honour ; and it directed the eyes of his compatriots to the young hero, whose blood was thus

liberally poured out from a principle of general philanthropy.

How freely would he let it flow, they thought, whenever called on, to shed it for them!

Thus, the bright sun of honour was shining over his head; and he wanted only Fortune's golden shower, to ripen his harvest of expected happiness.

CHAPTER II.

AT this crisis, Giovanni returned.

Having bespoken, for Rodolphe, the compassion and care of the excellent woman to whom his household cares were delegated, Giovanni hastened to the Piazza dell' Acqua Verde. He found Cesario on the point of going out, to keep an appointment with Beatrice.

With what joy, what affection did they embrace!—So ardent was the welcome of Cesario, that Giovanni could with difficulty refrain from imparting to him the narrative of his visit to Marseilles. Some reasonable fear, however, of possible disappointment, checked this useless overflow; and, contenting himself with detailing the other incidents of his journey,

he enjoyed his friend's sympathy, without risking his friend's future mortification.

Having given several sincere sighs to the probable fate of Madame de Fronsac, and to the history of the Cahet, Cesario hastened to convince Giovanni, that he had been unjust in estimating the character of Beatrice.

The strength of his argument lay in her extreme emotion when she believed that Giovanni had fallen under the hands of the banditti. He described her agonies then, and her joy afterwards ; he painted her subsequent interest in him, with all the ardour of unsuspecting sincerity.

He forgot not to say, that almost the first words she uttered, when restored to her senses, had been, "but where is your friend?"

Cesario saw, but remarked not, the sudden colour which spread over Giovanni's face, at the last sentence ; yet he remembered it in after times, and drew from it a fatal inference.

What, then, are those subtle operations of the mind, which can thus go on, unobserved, even by ourselves? yet which memory can recal afterwards, when neither foregone observation, nor subsequent reflection, has assisted in stamping an image of that act!

Giovanni would not have been sorry had Cesario suspected the veering inclination of Beatrice, from her conduct, and his disturbance; for to be suspected himself, of any passion for her, never entered his imagination: but he shrunk from the coarse, and perhaps unjustifiable task, of telling her lover, that he found her inconstant heart had now strayed to him.

In this humour, he consented, not unwillingly, to accompany his friend to San Pier d'Arena.

This beautiful fauxbourg was then the evening resort of all the youth and beauty of Genoa.

Carriages of any kind were uncommon;

but the few there were, regularly appeared there with the elders of families ; the young still preferring the gayer fashion of riding, or the freer one of walking.

As Giovanni, leaning on the arm of Cesario, advanced along the path, where this lively promenade commences, he directed his friend's attention to the strong contrast exhibited by the animated multitude at a distance, and the scene near at hand.

Where they stood, all was stillness, and fragrance, and rural beauty : the sea was so calm, that but for its soft, laving sound against the shore, it might have been imagined a moveless plane of crystal.

The verdant acclivities, rising from Sestri, to Campo Marone, were covered with the countless colours of evening ; while the loveliest of the stars, palpitating at intervals through those iris-tinctured clouds, rather excited tenderness than awakened to pleasure.

Giovanni paused ; and directing his

eye to the whirling chariots, and horses beyond, he said, "How ingenious we are in destroying the beauties, and delights of nature! This tranquil scene owes half its charm to its tranquillity; yet, that mad crowd hurry into it, marring the charm they profess is their attraction!"

Cesario was about to vindicate the motive, at least, of each individual; when, from a throng at a short distance, one fair rider darted towards them like a bright meteor.—By the carnation and white feathers on the head of her tasselled and tinkling palfrey, Giovanni knew it to be the Signora Beatrice. Cesario's beating breast recognised only her smiling self.

"Ah, my friend!" she exclaimed, with a tone eloquent of joy, and a look yet more eloquent, extending a hand to Giovanni.

In Cesario's unsuspecting ear, never had her voice sounded sweeter; for he

believed her admiration of Giovanni's character, the best proof of her own excellence. He ran to quiet the spirited little horse, which her fluttered grasp had no longer strength to rein in; but Giovanni forbore offering his assistance; and having shaken hands with her, remained a few paces off, returning her agitated and repeated exclamations of delight, with a countenance almost austere.

Cesario averted his face for a moment, to salute her advancing companions; Beatrice seized that opportunity, of directing a look to Giovanni, only too expressive of her mortification at his determined coldness: his modest eye fell under the unbridled glance. But his resolution was taken; and resolving to weary out her fancy by obstinate dullness, and extreme reserve, he only uttered a few words of friendly satisfaction, at seeing her look so well.

Turning to Marco Doria, who was in

the party, he repeated the remark he had made to Cesario, upon the folly of people coming for retirement, to mobs; and seeking pure air, in a cloud of dust.

“ But who comes hither, either for air or retirement?” asked Marco, who was at that moment the champion of society. “ The women come to kill; and we, to fall their victims. In short, the plain truth is, that all walk here, either to meet an old love, or to find a new one. Come, confess! Does not some bright-eyed beauty attract you!”

Giovanni shook his head, and smiled rather contemptuously: Marco re-iterated his charge. Giovanni recollected himself; and resuming that tranquil air, which was more withering to Beatrice's hopes, than the haughtiest scorn, said gaily:

“ Spare your artillery, my good Signor; 'tis wasting it on one bullet-proof. I have *had my* day of folly long ago. And though I do not value some of my

friends the less for being at this moment under the influence of the tyrant passion ; I may wish their serene evening of reasonable affections, were already come, like mine."

" Oh, infidel !" exclaimed Cesario sportively, and glancing at Beatrice. What was his astonishment to see her cheeks covered with tears ! With difficulty did he retain the bridle of her palfrey, while he pressed close to her ; hurrying out some expressions of amazement, and enquiry, and alarm.

Beatrice's vexation was beyond her power to control. " Your friend insults me !" she exclaimed sobbing, wildly wrapping her head in the Mezzaro, which had hitherto blown round her shoulders !

" My friend ! — Giovanni ! —" repeated Cesario, with a vacant gaze, recollecting Giovanni's words, and unable to comprehend what insult had been couched in them.

The rest of the little party exclaimed

loudly at the Signora's absurdity: Giovanni alone was silent. His heart was swelling with indignation, almost disgust; while he scarcely knew which most to wonder at, Beatrice's determined abandonment to her feelings, or Cesario's blind faith in her truth.

Each of the company repeated Giovanni's offending answer; at the same time coupling it with a lively rebuke of the Signora's touchy humour; and thus obliging her to recollect that the occult meaning was known only to herself; the insult none, if she were not conscious of meriting rebuke.

Forced, therefore, to rally herself, she coloured, tried to laugh, explained, defended, and finally confessing her own foolish misapprehension, and more foolish irritability, suffered Cesario to put her hand into that of his friend.

" 'Tis well," he said, as he prest them together, " that such a cloud of dust covers yonder multitude; we should not

else have escaped ridicule," and he turned aside, to recover his own composure.

Peace apparently restored, Beatrice declared herself weary of the promenade, and proposed returning home. Marco Doria volunteered riding back, to inform the Marchesa, that her daughter had left the drive; and, as the Marchesa's heavy coach never went at a livelier pace than a state-hearse, he whispered Cesario, he might have time for at least a folio of fond nonsense, ere the old lady should appear to interrupt it.

Signor Calva and the ladies now walked their horses to keep pace with their friends on foot; and the former, sporting with some ungraceful fashion of his wife's dress, threw a little gaiety into the conversation. All otherwise would have been sombre: for the spoiled Beatrice could not conquer her chagrin at the repelling air of Giovanni; and he would not, upon principle, attempt to varnish her unamiable mood.

Cesario, troubled, confounded, unknowing what to think, yet sure there was some latent cause for the strangeness of Beatrice, was lost in distracting fears and forebodings.

Alas, unhappy Cesario ! he conjectured nothing like the truth : he simply began to believe, that Giovanni unjustly disliked this object of *his* fondest admiration ; that she saw it, felt it, and resented it : that days of distress and dissension were approaching ; days, in which his heart would be rent alternately by his friend and his mistress.

At first this imagination plunged him into such deep sadness, that he neither heard nor answered what was addressed to him ; but, gradually, better thoughts dawned : his elastic character rose above the sudden pressure ; and, cherishing the belief of reconciling these two precious persons, by making their respective excellences more intimately known to each other, he recovered his spirits.

Instead of proceeding to the usual entrance of the Palazzo Rosso, Beatrice suddenly alighted from her horse at one of the garden-gates, and, giving her page orders to quit her, said "Farewell" to her party.

Every one returned her adieu, except Cesario; but he, whispering his resolution of attending her through those extensive gardens at so late an hour (for it was night), shook hands with Giovanni, and followed her.

Beatrice was no longer in a condition to control herself: the dignified firmness of Giovanni's manner, as they proceeded homewards, had dispossessed her of the little self-command she had ever to boast; and, released from other observers, she gave way, before Cesario, to all the violence of her feelings.

"No!" she cried, in a voice of desperation, bursting into a passion of tears, and repulsing the hand Cesario held out to her—"no! I never can—never will

be your's! Your friend hates me—ungrateful, unfeeling Giovanni!”

“Hates you!—Giovanni!—You will not be mine! — Beatrice!” — Cesario stood like one before whom some strange apparition is passing.

Beatrice recollected herself; but still she wept — wept more profusely. “What happiness should we have, if I were to know that the dearest friend of my husband disliked me—misinterpreted me—perhaps would infuse his doubts into him at last!”

“O heaven!” exclaimed Cesario: “shall I ever be forced to choose between my friend and Beatrice!”—and he shuddered as he flung his arms round her.

Beatrice leaned on his shoulder, and wept bitterly. “Why does he dislike me so?” she asked, in a more softened tone. “What have I done to deserve such savage treatment?”

“Be composed, my best-beloved!”

said Cesario, gently placing her on a seat by one of the fountains: "this excess of sensibility leads you astray. Would I had never confessed to you Giovanni's erroneous notions of your sex!—but did I not tell you, too, that he promises to recant all his heresies one day in your favour?"

"When?—when? what day?" exclaimed Beatrice.

Cesario pressed her agitated breast against his, while he fondly whispered a few words of the tenderest import. Beatrice struggled herself out of his embrace: "That day!—talk not of it, Cesario!" Her voice was hurried and broken. "Your friend hates me; and—and—you cannot think that I would disunite——"

"Why will you torment yourself, my Beatrice, by these fantastic griefs?" interrupted her lover. "You judge Giovanni as we do other men, and so misjudge him. You forget that he was once

oath-bound to repress even the slightest sentiment of regard or admiration for your charming sex : you forget that the eye of his spirit is not often withdrawn from the *one perfect being* ; and that, after contemplating such brightness, the brightest here are dark to his exalted sense. Thus, where your happy Cesario sees nothing but light, and life, and joy (fervently kissing her hand between each rapturous expression), he discovers a solitary something, which nature permits there, to show that Beatrice is not yet all angel."

He stopt, and, soothed by his fond flatteries, she "imparadised his soul" by one of her most bewitching smiles, and he resumed.

"Giovanni is visionary enough to demand heaven on earth ; and he seeks to bring it here by trying to make you faultless : he therefore stifles every expression of admiration, and speaks to you only as a monitor. Believe me, it costs

him much to conceal the deep interest you excite in him under the severe exterior of reproof. He has told me how dangerously charming he thinks your brief penitence and gay defiance.”

“Charming!” repeated Beatrice, delight dancing in her eyes: “if you could convince me that Giovanni, that your friend did not despise me!—ah! he will never do any thing but despise me!”

Cesario hastened to repeat to her numberless admiring and kind expressions of Giovanni’s relating to herself, tending to prove that she was an object of extreme interest to him.

While he repeated these, he coloured them (unconsciously) more highly than the originals from which they were drawn; and he increased their value by forgetting to state when they were said—in the earliest period of Giovanni’s acquaintance, ere he knew her thoroughly.

Beatrice fell into a deep reverie, and gave way to a thousand cheating fancies.

The paramount idea in this day-dream was, that Giovanni's coldness arose from restrained passion, and that he wrestled against her and himself from romantic fidelity to his friend.

With such an ally in his bosom, she thought, would she not prevail at last? She could scarcely doubt it. Snatched away by the joy of this belief, her stimulated passions left conscience and delicacy far behind; and, resolving to seize their prize, reckless of Cesario's peace and Giovanni's honour, she gaily started from her thoughtful posture.

Looking with all the graciousness of an elated heart upon the anxious countenance of Cesario, she said—"Well, then, make us friends again: let Signor Cigala come as usual: come oftener to the Palazzo Rosso; tell him that I am ready to sacrifice all my levities, all my wishes, to please the friend of Cesario."

Her eye sunk with her voice, as she uttered the last sentence; but again the

credulous Cesario was thrown into transport by that two-fold charm of tenderness and generosity which this speech contained.

Though he had argued against Beatrice's convictions in their past conversations, he had secretly and sadly confessed to himself that she was right, and that Giovanni's demeanor, at their meeting, had astonished even him by its coldness.

After the account he had given his friend of her anguish at his supposed murder, how stubborn must be that friend's prejudice against her character, if he could withstand such a proof of her ingenuous interest in the man so beloved by her Cesario. Cesario hoped, however, that her present generosity, in not only forgiving such ingratitude, but in offering to guide her conduct by Giovanni's admonitions, must conquer his esteem, and wrest the acknowledgment of it from his lips.

“ I will bring him to you to-morrow,” he said, as they parted at the garden-por-tico of the Palazzo, under the bright light of the the moon. “ I will make you friends again ; and after that, O, my Beatrice, may we three have but one heart !”

Beatrice could not bear the tender, touching, trusting tone with which this was said. She turned away her face abruptly from the moonlight which shone full on her false, false eyes, as they were on the point of seeking Cesario's, and, half repenting, half exulting, alternately wishing she could be true, and hoping Giovanni would be false, she just re-turned the pressure of her cheated lover's hand, and quitted him.

CHAPTER III.

CESARIO flew to the Strada Lomellini. He found Giovanni sitting tranquilly in his study, discoursing with Rodolphe, by the light of that pure planet from which Beatrice had just shrunk.

Cesario's impatience of any hindrance to the conversation he most desired, gave way before the interest excited by humanity. He was not skilled in languages, but he could utter a few sentences in imperfect French ; and the expressive kindness of his looks made even these unnecessary. He approached, and took the Cahet's hand. Rodolphe suffered his hand to remain in his for a moment in vacant surprise, while his eyes wandered from Cesario's beaming face

to the gentler light of his master's : but by degrees those eyes suffused, and having put Cesario's hand to his lips, he ran to Giovanni, took, and wrung, and kissed his with passionate gratitude ; then hurried out of their presence.

After a few moments given to the sensibility of Rodolphe, Cesario ingenuously repeated to Giovanni all that had just passed between himself and Beatrice. As frankly did he avow his own surprise at his friend's chilling return to her animated welcome of him.

Giovanni listened in profound silence ; for he was meditating how to reply. At length, with a clearing countenance, he said rather sportively,—“ It is too late to begin quarrelling with my nature, Cesario ; you and I have pledged ourselves to each other ; and you must endure my frost as I do your fire. — However, is it not a little unreasonable in you to expect that I shall throw myself into ecstasies at the sight of your mistress ! I welcomed

her, as any other sober-minded man would do the affianced wife of his friend ; and what more would you, or ought she to wish ?” — “ No Giovanni,” replied Cesario, gravely, “ yours is not a nature of frost ; and I feel that you *did* return the affecting joy of Beatrice with amazing insensibility. There is still some lurking disapprobation of her in your heart. What is it ? — our friendship gives me a right to repeat, what is it ?”

Giovanni was awhile silent. “ To be sincere with you,” he said at last, “ will offend or pain you — yet so pressed — the Signora ought not to press me — however, no matter ! — I confess then, there is something still, which dissatisfies me with her. Yet I do protest to you most solemnly, that there is nothing I desire so much to be assured of, as her friendship ; that if I find she really feels that sentiment for me, and will follow some advice I mean to give her, she will make me the happiest of men ; for she will then insure

to me both my friend and his happiness. — Take me to see her to-morrow, and be satisfied that I will ask her pardon for all my harshnesses with as much sincerity as she will promise me amendment.”

“ The expression in your eyes belies your words. — What impossible perfection is it that you want ? ” exclaimed Cesario, bewildered and amazed. “ I understand you less than I do Beatrice. In the name of Heaven, what is it you require ? — In our conversation before you went for France, your chief quarrel with Beatrice was her supposed deficiency in sensibility ; and now you seem almost angry with her for evincing so much. Giovanni, is not this unreasonable ? ”

“ Apparently so,” replied Giovanni, “ but have patience. To-morrow I will ask from her a proof of friendship for me, of attachment to you, of respect for herself ; and if she refuses, you ought to renounce her.”

“Renounce her!” repeated Cesario, and he stood motionless with astonishment.

“If she give this proof,” resumed Giovanni, “I shall hate myself; and if she forgive me afterwards, I will confess her scarcely less than angel—for in that case I must be incomprehensible to her.”

“You distract me!” exclaimed Cesario; “let us discuss this no further. I see what it is you mean: you suspect Beatrice of artifice: you think her sensibility on your account assumed.”

Giovanni averted his head; and a sigh of compassion for his friend’s blindness half escaped him.

“You do not answer me,” repeated Cesario, with a kindling countenance; “here let us part, then, for to-day. When matins are over, be ready for me to-morrow, and I will take you to Beatrice. She will be alone; let all be explained then—let her distinctly hear what are the heavy accusations you have to

bring against her, and what the trial of truth to which you mean to bring her. Let me learn, in short, whether I am henceforth to commit half my happiness into the hands of a friend, or into those of a madman." — Cesario looked sternly as he pronounced the last ungracious word ; and, refusing the hand Giovanni offered, abruptly departed.

Giovanni looked after him a moment with sorrow, apprehension, and pity in his heart ; murmured a few indulgent words, and turned to benevolent occupation for comfort.

The friends met the next day, with constraint on one side, and seriousness on the other. Cesario was justly displeased at the strange rigidity of his friend ; and Giovanni was perplexed how to convince Cesario of that of which he was too well convinced, though a fact of which he could bring no tangible proof, namely, Beatrice's views upon himself.

In silence they walked along the Strada Nuova; in silence they entered the glittering palace of the Brignoletti. A page conducted them to Beatrice: she was sitting in an absolute temple of flowers, "herself the fairest flower."

All those extravagant hopes which she had so suddenly and rashly conceived the day before, were now glowing on her cheek; she was sparkling with brightness and bloom.

She started from her seat on the friends' approach, and, extending a hand to each, exclaimed, "— We meet friends, Signor Giovanni? O if you could read my heart, and see how sincerely I covet your regard!" — As she said this, who that looked upon that frank and fearless brow, could have imagined there was ought beneath it she should have wished concealed?

Giovanni almost doubted the past evidence of his senses; but, fortifying himself anew against her prime witchcraft,—

that air of ingenuous youth, — he approached her.

Taking her hand, and resting his eyes on her for a few moments with earnest observation, he said, —

“ Signora, will you allow me to deal frankly with you? — will you pardon me hereafter, if it is proved that I have mistaken your intentions? — and will you, in that case, obtain for me Cesario’s pardon?”

“ Speak on, sir!” replied Beatrice, the colour heightening on her cheeks.

“ You know, Signora,” he resumed, “ that from the first days of our acquaintance, I had the boldness to notice those little blemishes, which you share with more than half your sex. I had often the pleasure of seeing you make some efforts at uprooting them : — surely that boldness was the best proof of my real regard for you, and for my friend? — you pardoned it.”

“ I did,” faltered Beatrice, turning

suddenly pale, and shrinking with indistinct dread.

“So far, then, there was no coldness nor resentment between us,” resumed Giovanni. “I felt a brother’s interest in you ; but at length I saw, or fancied I saw, (dare I own it ?) a decline in your professed affection for Cesario : — I had even the temerity to imagine that you were trifling with his peace ; that you never meant to fulfil your engagement with him.”

He was interrupted by an exclamation of indignation from Cesario. Beatrice stretched out her hand, and caught the arm of the latter ; for she had no longer courage to dare the remainder of this explanation. “Take me away,” she cried, averting her eyes from Giovanni’s speaking look ; “I can endure no more.”

“Stay, Signora ! In Heaven’s name, I adjure you, stay !” exclaimed Giovanni, turning with earnest expression from her quivering features to the in-

flaming countenance of his friend —

“ This is the crisis of my friendship with Cesario, and I have but a few more words to say.”

“ If I have wronged you, it is in your power to convince me, by at once doing what I believe it to be your duty to do ; that is, avow your attachment to your mother !”

“ To my mother !” exclaimed Beatrice, alarm and the pangs of disappointment struggling in her voice —

“ How should I ever be able to bear her anger ? — No, no. — Do not ask so hard a proof of me !” — and her humid eye-glance spoke volumes to his.

“ I should think systematic deception a harder task,” said Giovanni. He uttered that full-fraught sentence steadily, yet with compassionate apprehensiveness.

Beatrice felt the shaft strike ; and she burst into ungovernable tears.

Cesario caught her hand in his. “ Giovanni ! on your life proceed no fur-

ther!" he cried; "I will bear no more." There was a threatening cloud on his brow, which restored to it all its early haughtiness. Giovanni felt the recollection of former days press upon him, as he looked at his friend; and he looked but the more tenderly for that recollection. He did not speak.

"What inhuman proof of attachment to me do you require of the fond heart on which I repose with perfect confidence?" asked Cesario, after mastering the first blaze of anger. "You have more than once urged this upon me; and have I not uniformly assured you, that I was certain the avowal of our engagement would not only overwhelm Beatrice with her mother's wrath, but prove my sentence of banishment from the Palazzo Rosso? It is in the Marchesa's power to enclose her daughter in a cloister; to debar her from friends, liberty, every thing, in short, but life, till the day of her minority expires? What

madness, then, to ask the consent we know she never would give; and to make for her a plea for separating us at once?"

"Yet, grant it should prove so, my Cesario," replied Giovanni mildly. "You would then have the consciousness of acting rightly; and two years sacrificed to integrity would make you both more worthy of happiness. I grant, the Marchesa is of a severe temper; ambitious, prejudiced: but you stand high in public expectation. You are of noble blood! Why should not the Signora try her mother with these arguments? Why should she, whose influence is unbounded over the Marchesa in all other things, just shrink from exerting that influence on the point most connected with her own peace and good name? — Amiable Beatrice!" he said, turning to her, and gently taking her hand, "believe me, I am *solely* actuated by the desire of seeing you and Cesario united in *hearts*, as well

as fates. Waiving my own satisfaction in a happy result, I do strenuously urge you to take the step proposed, as the one most likely to insure your future comfort. Honestly proclaim your engagement with a man, whose brows wear the noblest crown of honour and of victory! Have the courage to dare the chance of being severed a while, that you may pledge your faith to each other hereafter without a blush! Rescue yourself from the gross imputation you now labour under, of sporting with the love you never mean to reward! Recover your self-respect as a daughter, and attach to yourself, for life, a friend, who will devote his whole existence to repair his present harshness."

His benevolent eyes were suffused by his earnestness. Beatrice raised her's; and fixed them, for the first time since his entrance, steadily upon him. How seducing, how dangerous were the tears that floated those beautiful eyes! How

doubly dangerous their penetrating expression!

“ *You ask me to do this, Giovanni!*” she said, after a long pause. “ *You ask me — well then — I promise.*”

She had no sooner uttered that momentous promise, than her eyelids closed, and she sank into the extended arms of the transported Cesario.

Giovanni gazed on her for a moment in a trance of feelings long unknown to him: it was the infirmity but of a moment: he started at his own weakness; and, resolutely extinguishing whatever unhallowed fire pity had kindled, he turned towards Cesario.

“ *I have overwrought her tender nature,*” he said. (Alas, why was Beatrice then sensible to the pathos of his voice?) “ *And now, Cesario, I confess it is tender — heroic, I believe! When she revives, pray her to forgive me. Tell her, I depend on her promise for the sake of your happiness and her own;*

tell her, she and Cesario will be united henceforth in my heart, and in my prayers."

Giovanni was powerfully affected; too powerfully for restraint: and Cesario, troubled, bewildered, amazed, knew not whether the emotion with which his breast was heaving, were grief or gladness.

He felt the delicate frame of Beatrice trembling in his arms; and he asked himself, why all this was done; and by what authority Giovanni had made her consent to enter upon a line of conduct from which she foreboded such disastrous consequences?

In this stupor of thought, he offered no resistance to his friend's departure; but remained, after Giovanni was gone, still supporting Beatrice.

Giovanni returned home in great disturbance of mind. He shut himself into a distant apartment, where no one might

invade him, and abandoned himself to reflection.

What had he done? — forced a young inexperienced girl to promise the fulfilment of a solemn engagement, from which her heart revolted! Was he sure that Cesario's happiness would be secured by it? Was he sure that her feeble character could support, throughout life, the high tone just given to it by the enthusiasm of self-sacrifice?

What would become of him, if her culpable vacillation towards him should re-appear after she had become the wife of his friend! Would it be possible for him to continue in that intimate union with Cesario, while apprehensive of awaking in *his* mind the suspicion, or in *her's* the reality, of a guilty passion?

How had this unexpected self-devotion of Beatrice destroyed his views?

Giovanni had calculated, with seeming reason, upon her petulant refusal to give the pledge he demanded; he had ima-

gined her heart full of childish, wilful passion; nor dreamt of the temporary elevation to which even passion could raise itself, when his pure character was its object, and his admiration its aim.

Every look, every word, hitherto, had testified Beatrice's strong and involuntary sentiment for him: perhaps Cesario had never, indeed, won more than her lively gratitude; if so, she was to be pitied, while blamed; and Giovanni felt, that he must be more or less than man, did not his heart melt at her intended self-sacrifice.

That mixture of extreme weakness, and extreme strength in the character of Beatrice, which her present conduct displayed, was of itself calculated to awaken compassion and tenderness. Giovanni's better reason was bewildered by it for a brief instant; but not his principles: they faltered not. His heart, still loyal to his friend, and impregnable in virtue, throbbed not with one lawless pulse.

D 2

After the first confusion of surprise and pity was over, he began to think with more distinctness. Whatever distress might follow the promise into which he had drawn Beatrice, he believed he had no cause to condemn his share in the transaction. Her indiscreet conduct towards himself, rendered it his duty either to extort from her an avowal of her altered sentiments for Cesario, or to re-awaken in her a sense of shame and of honour; at least, that indiscretion made it his duty to protest, as plainly as delicacy would permit, against the effect of her charms upon his integrity.

This duty he had performed: his intention was unimpeachable; the event might be unfortunate; but for the intention only was he responsible.

The longer Giovanni reflected upon the past scene at the Palazzo Rosso, the more he became convinced that the enthusiasm of Beatrice would not have continuance. At any rate, he was certain

that her self-command could not proceed beyond the mere act of asking the Marchesa's consent to her union with Cesario: she would find it too difficult a task to conceal that disgust and aversion to him which must arise in such an indulged heart as her's, the moment she should consider herself his victim. These feelings would force themselves on notice; and the ultimate consequence must be — explanation, and separation.

But how would fare his friendship with Cesario during this stormy time? Giovanni dreaded to answer the question.

The only personal sacrifice he could make, in return for the one which the infatuated Beatrice was now certainly intending, was some portion of that full-flowing confidence with Cesario, without which friendship withers and dies. Perhaps this was the bitterest sacrifice fate could exact from a man to whom friendship was every thing; but honour and honesty forbade him to give a deter-

minate meaning to those expressions from Beatrice, which his mind had too faithfully shaped into their original image; and unless he did so, a cloud must always cover his motives in the transaction.

After the strictest scrutiny of himself, Giovanni was satisfied that he had acted right; and that conviction fortified him against any consequence.

Towards evening, Cesario appeared. He came to acknowledge, and to ask forgiveness, for his angry impetuosity in the morning; to confess his conviction of his friend's disinterested anxiety for his reputation and happiness, as well as for that of Beatrice; and to avow his own belief, after cooler consideration, that they were imperiously called on by duty to act as he advised.

This was generous affection, with overflowing measure! It partook of that trusting credulity which kept Cesario so blind to Beatrice's dereliction: for Giovanni felt, that until Beatrice's impru-

dences of speech should be known to Cesario, the latter must always have rational ground for considering his friend's determined interference with their private plans, an absolute persecution.

But Giovanni knew his own motives were pure, though obliged to lie concealed; and he was content, therefore, to owe Cesario's return of confidence to partial blindness, since he dare not demand his scrutiny.

Giovanni had now to listen and to sympathise with Cesario's fervent views: that sanguine spirit was again all hope and fond anticipation. The Marchesa's consent to his immediate marriage with her daughter, no longer seemed improbable; and his ardent imagination soon pictured future honours, plucked from the steep of danger, ennobling and justifying the Signora's choice.

It was a hard task for Giovanni to partake any part of his friend's transport; for as yet he knew not what to

believe, or what to wish about Beatrice. If she were to abide by her sudden heroism, from the moment she became Cesario's wife, his friend was bound, by every feeling sacred in man, to forget, himself, and to make her forget, if possible, that she had ever given *him* cause to suspect her heart had strayed from its first ties.

The possibility of this consummation rendered discretion now, an absolute duty on his part ; yet, even while he felt this, there was a misgiving *something* in his breast, which almost smothered every attempt at participation with his friend.

When they met again the next morning, Cesario brought a billet he had just received from Beatrice ; it was evidently written in great agitation, and contained these lines :—

“ EVERY thing combines to distress me, Cesario. I sent to the Signora Calva after you left me yesterday, that I might

intreat her to charge herself with the dreaded disclosure to my mother. I learnt to my surprise and mortification, that she is gone into the country for an indefinite time. How I wept when they told me this! I dreaded such a scene with my mother! A convent, and separation from all I love, for nineteen dreary months! Yet I determined to risk every thing to make *you* happy, and force your friend to esteem me. All that, however, is over; I was called to my mother before day-break this morning, and found her so very ill, that I am told her life depends upon a breath. Can I speak to her of myself, of you, of any one at such a time? Tell your friend, however, that when I may do so without endangering her life, I am too anxious to show him that I am *not* the weak and worthless thing he thinks me, to delay the proof a single moment. —

Farewell. ———”

After Giovanni had read this letter, Cesario told him, that he had already called at the Palazzo Rosso, where he heard that the Marchesa was even worse than her daughter had described; her complaint was inward inflammation. Giovanni reddened at this information, ashamed of his first feeling, which had been doubt of the fact.

He then proceeded to say what might be expected on such an occasion; every thing that could tend to soften Cesario's concern for the present distress of Beatrice, by representing its probable effect upon the happiness of their future lives. The Marchesa's death would at once emancipate her daughter from control, and at the same time spare her the pain of avowing an engagement, made so culpably without her mother's sanction.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE the Marchesa continued in danger, her daughter could not with propriety admit the visits of gentlemen. The friends were therefore banished from the Palazzo Rosso for some time. To Cesario it was indeed banishment, but to Giovanni it was relief and repose.

He employed himself as usual, actively and benevolently ; dividing his days between Genoa and the Marino ; and giving to the instruction of Rodolphe every moment which he could spare from prior claims.

His confessor, a man of probity and talent, undertook to teach Rodolphe the Italian tongue ; and to enlighten his mind upon spiritual concerns. Giovanni

himself was the Cahet's instructor in the every-day occurrences of life ; and to him it was actual happiness to watch the progress of such a mind. At first, Giovanni was disappointed in the pleasure he had expected to find in the Cahet, at the sight of public spectacles, and works of art. Rodolphe only testified a sort of dull wonder, which quickly ceased, and appeared to leave no traces. But in after-times, as the faculty of observation was roused in him by some conception of the powers required to produce what he saw, he expressed more and more astonishment ; showed interest ; looked, examined ; understood, admired.

The perfectly ignorant may wonder, but they cannot admire ; to feel the full value of a discovery in science, or a production of art, we must understand the difficulties which have been conquered ; know the deficiencies which have been supplied, and the advantages gained.

Thus, Rodolphe's curiosity and plea-

sure increased, in proportion to his greater acquaintance with the objects calculated to arouse them ; and, mixing with the multitudes of a great city upon equal terms, the mere absence of insult from them, was to him absolute kindness : all their countenances beamed with benevolence in his unpractised eyes.

Such feelings brightened his own face ; its livid hue, was now fast disappearing ; while his once famished frame began gradually to assume the fullness and firmness of health.

He attached himself to Giovanni with devotion nearly amounting to idolatry ; and, so happy was he made by this indulgence of his affectionate nature, that it was only now and then the remembrance of Auguste came over him in all its bitterness, and drowned him in tears.

Yet the less acute remembrance of that interesting child was stationary in his mind : mixing with its transports of pre-

sent joy and gratitude, just sufficient sadness, to soften and to elevate them.

“ Do you suppose Rodolphe often thinks now of his poor little friend !” asked Cesario, one day, of Giovanni.

“ I can give you a proof, that he does ; and I like him the better for it ;” returned Giovanni ; “ I never take him out, and he never returns from any place, without having seen some face which reminds him of Auguste : there is not a church in Genoa, where he does not find some picture of a youthful Jesus or St. John, which he says resembles what Auguste was. These pictures are rarely like one another ; so the heart must be very full of an object, when that object so possesses the eye.”

Cesario admitted the truth of this remark ; for he had as often felt or fancied resemblances to his lamented father in heads expressive of benignity and mildness. At the end of a fortnight, the Marchesa Brignoletti was pronounced

convalescent, and her daughter eagerly prepared to receive the congratulatory visits of her acquaintance.

When Cesario and Giovanni presented themselves, they found her in a circle with the Signor Calva, imprudently reproaching him for having absented himself and his wife from Genoa, at a time when their friendly offices would have been most welcome.

The Signor well knew, that by these friendly offices, Beatrice meant the opportunity their house afforded her of seeing the persons there, whom she could not then receive at her mother's; and he smiled equivocally as he whispered, on seeing Cesario enter — “It is quite time to put an end to this business, my cousin; I have made up my mind:—you must either get the Marchesa's consent, or no more meetings with us. The Signora and I thought we were doing good, when we consented to befriend your attachment to yon brave fellow; but I

believe now we had better never have interfered : it will break off, and — you'll survive it."

He bowed himself out of the room as he concluded, leaving Beatrice covered with confusion, and trembling with vexation.

What was she to do? She thought her former confidants evidently suspected the change in her sentiments; they might impart their suspicions to Cesario; he would then blaze out into madness; he would make their engagement and her inconstancy public; he would prove her duplicity to her mother; Giovanni would despise her for all this, and willingly give the promise, which the other would exact, of shunning her for ever; or if, indeed, Giovanni avowed sympathy with her wishes, the death of one or both rivals, might be the consequence.

These thoughts flashed through her mind, as the friends made their way to her. At first she could hardly speak to

them for agitation. Cesario attributed this unusual emotion to filial feelings ; and Giovanni, to a heart softened by her mother's danger, and to her meritorious struggle with herself. Willing to show her that her present conduct was right and acceptable to him, and that he gave her credit for the intention she professed in her letter to his friend, Giovanni's manner assumed a soothing air of sympathy ; he enquired the particulars of the Marchesa's illness, applauded Beatrice for her dutiful attendance in her sick chamber ; and assured her, in a lowered voice, that, by persevering in her present conduct, she would command his respect and admiration through life.

If Giovanni were too amiable to Beatrice, even when repulsive and cold, how irresistible did he appear, now that he smiled on her as he did on Cesario—now that his eyes occasionally rested on hers with a look of cordial approbation ! She could scarcely bear those eyes : for,

under all their sweet expressions, her heart swelled with emotions almost beyond control. The love, the brightness, the dark beauty of Cesario's so lately extolled eyes, were no longer any thing to her : all there, which had once beamed light, was to her blank ; the charm was gone—the passion which had bestowed that enrapturing charm !

How brief, how worthless are all the affections of a heart, which does not find its chief delight in contemplating the moral perfections of its object ! for in virtue only, do we find increasing, unsating beauty ; in virtue only, do we ask no novelty !

On the charms of moral beauty, all mankind agree : her divine lineaments are to be traced from rules drawn by a divine hand ; and she has only, therefore, to be seen, to be acknowledged and adored : but material beauty is a thing of mere opinion, subject to argument, unsatisfactory when unconnected with

nobler qualities, and perishable in her nature. Unite the two; place the divinely-aspiring soul in the mould 'made after God's own image,' and we have the perfection of man. Then, to love such union—then, to admire the outward type of inward excellence, is natural and right; and we honour the Creator in estimating his work.

Cesario might have observed Beatrice's inattention to himself, had he not been too agreeably occupied in remarking the mutual confidence which he believed was now established between her and his friend. To fix that confidence was the chief object of his present anxiety; after which, he hoped that Giovanni's kind counsel would fortify the courage of Beatrice; and that, supported by him, and prompted by her own wishes, she would make the trial they proposed of the Marchesa's indulgence.

From the number of persons coming to offer congratulations, and to make en-

quiries, nothing particular could pass in conversation ; Cesario, therefore, yielded to the motion of his friend, and whispering the wish of finding Beatrice alone, at an earlier hour the next day, he bade her adieu !

In their way homewards they encountered the Prince of Melfi. He was standing under the portico of a Palazzo in the Strada Balbi.

“ I have news for you, young men,” he said, holding out a letter : “ the Turk is preparing employment for us all. Signor Cigala, I hope you are still knight enough to draw a sword, and dare a culverin, in aid of your former brethren ? ”

“ What means your Highness ? ” asked Giovanni, advancing.

“ This letter, here,” returned the Prince, “ tells me the Sultan Solyman seriously meditates the siege of your island—of Malta I mean ; and if we have any true blood in our veins, there is not a man amongst us, who will not be

ready, aye rejoiced, to pour it out, in defence of that bulwark of Christendom."

The Prince thought not of compliment; but Giovanni instinctively bowed his head at this gratifying testimony to the order he still loved; and, taking the letter, he ran hastily over its contents.

It was written by a person whose local situation stamped his communications with authority; and the information it gave, was of a nature to rouse all the dormant fire in Giovanni's breast.

It represented the Sultan in the highest state of irritation against the Knights of St. John, whose ships not only scoured the Archipelago, but had the boldness to run under the very guns of the Ottoman forts. The richest prizes captured by the Turkish corsairs had been retaken by those valiant chevaliers; so that, deprived of their plunder, and insulted in their very harbours, the Turks were roused into a determination of exterminating the whole Order at a blow. Solyman had al-

ready issued orders for the assembling of troops at the different ports of the Morea, to be ready for embarkation at the proper season : he was increasing his fleet, and had sent privately to demand the aid of his bashas at Algiers and Tripoli.

All the Mahometan powers, therefore, were in motion ; and it remained for Christendom to prove that her energies were equal to the strength of her cause.

“ It will be a desperate struggle ! ” exclaimed the experienced Doria, as Giovanni transferred the letter to Cesario.

“ Desperate ! ” repeated Giovanni, and the look which accompanied that word transformed him into another man ; “ say, a glorious struggle ! Who will remain spectator of it ? — I would not give my right to be an actor there, for all the other distinctions of life ! ”

“ But you are no longer one of the Order ? ”

“ In my soul, I am, ” replied Giovanni ; and again such a brightness spread over his face, that the prince stood astonished.

“Now I believe all I have heard of you!” he exclaimed, eying him with a smile of pleasure. “When I used to pass you in your walks, or meet you in society, and see you so calm, so like a man of peace and study, I confess it was not possible for me to conceive that such had ever been *a thunderbolt of war*.”

Cesario, who glanced over the whole letter in an instant, now interrupted them: he precipitated himself upon Giovanni, crying out, “I will accompany you.” He forgot Beatrice, as he embraced his friend in a transport of generous enthusiasm.

“You will go under my orders, I hope,” said the prince, with good-humour; “the fleet of Genoa will make but a sorry figure in the harbour of her besieged ally, if her best sailors choose to volunteer fighting on shore.”

“You think then, my prince,” asked Giovanni, “that, if the Turk persists in his resolution, Genoa will assist the Grand Master?”

“ Can you doubt it ?” enquired Doria, “ we shall meet before the guns of St. Angelo, depend on it.”

“ And when may this formidable operation commence ?” asked Cesario, suddenly recollecting his bright prospects of love and felicity.

“ The project is but hatching,” replied Doria, “ and will require time to mature. ’Tis now November : I should think they cannot be ready before spring. Those infidel dogs hope to perfect their plan before it is guessed at ; and, to do so, they must *creep* towards it ; that gives us time ; and if I could command Spain as easily as I hope to move Genoa, I’d scotch the young snakes in their nest. I’d burn or cripple every galley before they could assemble into mischief.”

“ Ah my prince ! and rob the brave chevaliers of the glory they are about to gain !”

Doria smiled kindly at Cesario ; then said temperately, “ At your age I should

have made the same exclamation ; but I have now lived long enough to know that the greatest glory a soldier or sailor can obtain, is to give up a brilliant action, when the same object may be reached by a less showy and less dangerous road. I should like fighting and fame as well as the youngest of you ; but, if I can prevent the Turk beforehand, my conscience won't excuse me if I neglect it."

While this short dialogue was passing between the prince and his officer, Giovanni was musing upon the probable effect of the present conversation on his friend's destiny. He now repented the precipitancy with which he had urged Beatrice to declare her engagement, since it was likely that circumstances would remove both friends for a period long enough to shake even her latest attachment. But who may foresee events? At any rate, he thought, "I have gained one salutary point,—she is awakened to some emulation of nobler character."

“And why should not my friend accompany me, when I go to Malta?” he asked suddenly, anxious to remove Cesario, as soon as possible, from the circle of Beatrice’s enchantments. “I will pledge myself to yield him up to you and his duty, the moment the fleet of the republic appears off our island: meanwhile, why may he not share in whatever is going on at Il Borgo?”

“I see no objection to it,” replied the prince; “but what says Adimari himself?” My sons tell me that there is a certain attraction in a certain quarter—which—”

Cesario’s colour deepened into crimson; he cast down his eyes in some confusion, while stammering out a few words of faint denial.

“Come, come, young man,” resumed Doria, “I am neither your confessor nor your judge; but if I can be your advocate (not with the fair lady, for there you don’t want one of course,) but with her relations, I am heartily at your ser-

vice. My years and name, perhaps, might have influence."

"O my prince!" exclaimed Cesario, seizing his hand, and incapable of uttering more. Giovanni foresaw the agitating scene which must follow; and giving Doria a sign, they turned from the portico into the garden of the Palazzo. There, secure from observation, the warm-hearted Doria repeated his offer of service; and enquired the extent of Cesario's addresses to the Signora Brignoletti.

When he heard of their actual engagement, he showed much surprise. "Her mother, certainly, is far from suspecting it!" he said; "the lively Signora has contrived to make her believe that she listens to your enamoured complaints, only to laugh at them. The Marchesa has repeated to me several excellent *bons mots* of her daughter about you. By the mass! this young lady would make a capital politician: however, I conclude

stratagems are as fair in love as in war; so we'll not be too nice. As I have always had some weight with the Marchesa, I will do my best to make her favourable. You are noble, if her daughter be rich—you are brave, she beautiful: in my mind the thing is suitable enough. What shall I do?—speak to the Marchesa, or take counsel with the daughter first?"

Giovanni undertook an answer to this; for Cesario, struck with what the prince had said unreflectingly, was standing silent, astonished and mortified.

It was Giovanni's opinion, that the prince should at once see and speak with the Marchesa, when her health would permit; that of course he should use the only argument the case allowed, Cesario's noble birth and rapidly-rising honours. But perhaps for the lady's sake, it might be as well merely to say, that his young friend had every reason to hope his constancy and character had distinguished him in the Signora's eyes above her other

admirers; and that what Cesario now sued for, was but permission to declare his passion in the world, as one not forbidden by the Marchesa; after which he would hasten to win honours, ere he would venture to ask the hand of Beatrice.

“So! here I have plunged all at once into a love-affair!” exclaimed the frank-hearted prince: “at my age it is almost ridiculous. I could not—I would not do more for one of my own boys: and let me tell you, Adimari, I am half inclined to make it a quarrel between us, that you have not considered me as a father in this business. You have fallen in love, and given up coming to see me; and I should never have known more of the thing than what common report said, had I not, by some odd chance, taxed you with it myself.”

“I confess my fault!” replied Cesario, respectfully, yet fervently kissing the hand then extended to him; “but to

talk of Beatrice to any one but a friend of my own age, (glancing at Giovanni;) and besides, I knew Your Highness had concerns of your own."

"Aye, aye!" interrupted the prince, with a sigh which he hemmed away: "some of my children find me work enough. You may thank the heart-aches which one of them often gives me, for the high, high value I set upon character and conduct. They are worth all the titles and riches in the world. Parents may think themselves happy when their children set their hearts upon persons who have no other fault than want of money."

The veteran's care-furrowed brow clouded as he spoke, and his kindly eyes suffused.

Giovanni, who had heard the family-circumstances to which he alluded, was respectfully silent.

Rumour said that the eldest Doria was privately married to an infamous crea-

ture, who had not only been his mistress, but was notorious from a former connection of that sort with the most profligate cardinal at Rome; and the brave father contemplated, with bitterness, the prospect of all his honours (honours so nobly won) descending to the children of such a disgraceful union.

He had to lament, also, this son's ruinous habit of deep play; a habit into which he had been led by intimacy with a foreigner of high rank but sordid principles; and, as Doria's second son (then absent on a state mission) was eminently qualified to increase the lustre of the family, that circumstance seemed to sharpen the father's pangs. In truth, he could not forbear regretting that the rights of primogeniture were unalienable: he could not always suffocate a murmur, when he looked on the brightness of his own and his uncle's fame, and saw the black eclipse with which it was threatened by his eldest born.

But how often do we witness these equal distributions of Providence! where the one scale is so overflowing with distinctions and prosperity, disgrace and disunion too often weigh down the other!

Cesario's quick sensibility was moved—he thought of his own father, whose slightest wish had ever been the law of *his* life; the image affected him; so that he could not refrain from once more taking Doria's hand, and giving it the pressure of respectful sympathy.

The veteran wrung his in return, and smiling cheerfully, said, — “Well — you must let me know when I should ask for an audience of the Marchesa: your fair mistress will of course give you the earliest intimation of her mother's complete recovery. Meanwhile, go home and think of your crusade. Make up your mind on that subject; for, if it comes to any thing, you must apply officially for leave.”

“ I shall go back immediately to the Palazzo Rosso,” said Cesario; “ if I can see Beatrice for five minutes only — go with me, Giovanni — no, stay — I had better see her alone : she will be so overcome — so overjoyed at being relieved from this trying confession to her mother. How I bless this fortunate explanation for her sake ! — The prince’s gracious arguments in my favour will have smoothed at least part of her difficulties. ”

He was hurrying along as he spoke, and, having reached the gate by which they had entered, darted into the street.

Giovanni accompanied the prince to the door of his own residence ; conversing, as they went, upon the subject most important to them, the expected invasion of Malta.

Having discussed it in all its forms, they separated ; the one, to return into family-cares, and the other to wait for the re-appearance of his friend.

CHAPTER V.

CESARIO came back disappointed : the Signora Brignoletti was in her mother's oratory at private mass, and could not be disturbed. But he had returned home, written, and given a letter for her to her page ; in which he briefly recapitulated the events of the morning, and requested her to allow him a meeting at vespers, in the church of San Siro, after her usual attendance there.

Never had Giovanni seen him in such a tremor of spirit : Cesario called himself intoxicated with joy and hope ; he believed himself so ; yet was there a troubled expression in his countenance, which showed that all was not as he wished within.

In truth, there *was* a something rankling there — a trifle ; — but it was a stinging trifle ; and it pressed upon the most sensitive nerve of his character — its pride.

The Prince of Melfi had said, that Beatrice had made her mother believe Cesario was the object of her ridicule. — In Cesario's eyes this was a mortal sin : — it would have been so to any delicate mind ; and he judged rightly, when he thought, that the woman who truly loves, would almost as soon profane *sacred subjects* by irreverent speech, as breathe or endure one contemptuous breath against the object of her affections. He, to whom she hopes to vow love and obedience for life ; he, whose will is to be her law and her delight ; must be, in her estimation, the noblest of his kind, or her love and her submission will prove but visions of the fancy.

Cesario tried to banish this recollection, but it returned again and again ;

and at last he had no other refuge than in the hope that the prince had mistaken the Marchesa.

He now repented the proud feeling which had withheld him from asking Doria to explain himself further on this subject; yet while repenting his pride then, he was now yielding to the same infirmity, and debarring himself the comfort of Giovanni's probable better knowledge in her favor.

Giovanni, however, was too clear-sighted not to know what troubled his friend's transports: he forebore from remarking it: cheering himself with the hope that this dissatisfaction with Beatrice, might lead to that perfect acquaintance with her selfish insincerity, which must finally cure his infatuation.

Upon Giovanni himself, this new light acted like a blessed charm. He saw Beatrice as she really was; light, hollow, ungoverned either by principle or reason; artful, even in the very tempest of the

passions : a character, in short, which was rapidly approaching the most startling lengths, solely from its deficiency of self-government.

Thus she, who began with innocence, might easily be led to end in crime : and Giovanni felt with a shudder, that it was in his power to bring her to that horrid point.

So impressed, he found it a difficult task to speak of Beatrice as her lover's present state demanded ; but the subject of Malta fortunately was now so connected with that of Beatrice, that he soon succeeded in engaging Cesario's attention from her, and arousing him to that lively impatience for noble action, which was the natural bent of his soul.

On this day, Cesario watched the setting sun with peculiar anxiety : — he watched the purple twilight till it deepened into its last solemn shade, and then he darted out.

He found the principal streets thronged

with people. — The relics of some saint were carrying in procession from a church in the city to one beyond the walls ; and he could scarcely get along through the crowd of priests and nuns, the long train of light of whose torches, was seen blazing over the dark mass of rabble behind.

Their sweetly-solemn chant was unheard by him ; and but for the interruption their procession gave to his eagerness, perhaps he might not have seen them ; so intent was he upon his principal object.

He pushed forwards, regardless of every thing ; afraid that Beatrice might be deterred by this very crowd from attending vespers. On reaching the cathedral, he was agreeably disappointed ; for he not only found the Signora there, but saw the church was nearly empty. Almost every one had left it to join the procession.

As the service was not quite concluded, he stood at a little distance from the spot where Beatrice was saying her last prayer ;

and his eye, after one fond glance at her kneeling figure, turned to fix upon the monument of his father.

The scene ; the situation ; the mixture of transport and dissatisfaction which was swelling his breast ; the recollection of all that he had enjoyed, during his father's life, and all he had suffered since his death ; the idea of Giovanni ; the paternal care of Doria ; and lastly, Beatrice's insensibility, when she first saw his father's monument ; every one of these circumstances pressed upon him with more than usual force. Some prophetic sadness mingled with regret for past blessings ; and he almost audibly exclaimed, " O Beatrice, why am I compelled to feel that there is a want in the creature I love dearest ? " —

A moment afterwards, the small congregation separated ; and Cesario, hastening to Beatrice, led her into a remote part of the church.

There they walked long and undis-

turbed. Beatrice was veiled from head to foot ; so that, except from the sound of her voice, it was impossible to discover her emotions.

Cesario first recapitulated the friendly purpose of Prince Doria, together with his own hopes and wishes ; then described in glowing terms all the glory he promised himself in serving with the Knights of St. John ; and at last ventured to declare his condemnation of what had so keenly pained him.

Beatrice did not lose the opportunity this afforded her. During his discourse she had heard only, that Giovanni was still as eager as ever to urge on her marriage, or at least the public avowal of her engagement with his friend : she only saw Giovanni resolutely flying from her. Whatever impelled him, whether despotic principle, or cold indifference to her enchantments, Cesario was the cause, and, as such, Cesario became almost hateful in her eyes. The idea of marrying him,

even of confessing that she ever wished to do so, was abhorrent to her mind; and, bursting into repeated passions of tears, she reproached him for his honourable censure of her humiliating artifice with her mother; declared, he loved her no longer as he had done; that she never would marry one who could make so ungrateful a return for an innocent deceit practised from tenderness for him; and finally, in a tone of distraction, protested her resolution of shutting herself up from the ungrateful world in a convent.

At first, Cesario yielded to her storm of indignation; for he thought it but a storm, brief as violent, and excusable, perhaps, in one whose heart, he fondly fancied, meant right, even when her judgment led her wrong.

But Beatrice was not to be softened, either by his silence, his submission, or his weak pleadings; 'he had unwarily given her an argument for breaking with him, and she therefore resented this first

rebuke of his, with a violence which argued ill for his lawful rule over her, whenever she should endow him with a husband's authority.

At this moment, however, the amazed and agonised Cesario thought of nothing but the frightful possibility of losing her affections: he conjured her, in the name of their former confidence, to recal her cruel threat; to remember how he had loved, how idolised her; to think what distraction must follow if she persisted in taking the veil. He implored her in the name of that father, whose memorial stood before them—that father, for whom she alone was an equivalent, not to destroy at one stroke all the promise of his youth; not to condemn him to madness or self-destruction.

Beatrice was inflexible: she broke from his arms, as he threw himself distractedly at her feet, trying to clasp her knees; and calling to her page without, she hurried into the street.

Her disappearance roused the lover from his trance : he started from his ignoble posture ; indignation kindled in him like sudden fire, while, with a heart which might be said actually to burn, he rushed out of the church.

His looks and manner, when he entered with Giovanni, scarcely needed explanation. He threw himself into a seat with a look in which the fire of outraged love was, alas, quite gone out ! He was now pale and haggard.

“ It is past — gone ! — gone ! — ” he exclaimed. “ She is implacable.”

The last words astonished Giovanni, who rather expected to hear that she had made some half confession of her altered feelings.

“ Implacable ! ” he repeated, “ in what have you offended her ? ”

Cesario hurried out an explanation ; but it was so often broken by his passionate bursts of anguish and self-blame,

that it was long ere Giovanni could collect the particulars.

This truest of friends could almost have ejaculated a thanksgiving for so critical a turn in the conduct of Beatrice; but when he looked upon the distracted figure of the man whom he cherished with a brother's tenderness, his heart melted into sympathy. He approached him, and by every affectionate art sought to assuage the acuteness of immediate suffering.

The end Giovanni foresaw and rejoiced in; he foresaw that Beatrice would at last completely unmask herself, and that Cesario would escape so unworthy an union. In the tumult and anxiety of war, he hoped his spirit might find that lively interest without which a heart like his, must lose all relish for life. Could he be brought to endure his present desolation of soul but for a certain period, after that, his recovery from a passion he

would then begin to blush at, would be certain.

Giovanni himself had experienced this: he had gone through every stage of pain and amendment, which they must pass through, whose affections have been fixed either on a fickle or a deceitful object; and he knew, therefore, better than most men, what arguments to use with Cesario.

It was no longer his duty to direct his friend's attention to the Signora's faults; it was rather his province to hold off part of that heavy weight of disappointment which must at last fall on him, and which, coming suddenly, might crush him at once. He made light of Beatrice's anger; represented it as the wrath of an indulged child, which, if it had no root in the heart, could not have outlived the instant of its utterance.

"Surely," he said, "Cesario could not imagine her seriously, deliberately resolved on punishing him with such

rigour for having uttered an unwelcome truth; and yet continue to think her worthy of love and regret?"

Cesario felt that he ought *not* to regret her if it were so—but that he *would* not!—Who that has ever loved, and ever felt or fancied unkindness from the person beloved, who in such circumstances could have replied sincerely!

Giovanni's affectionate soothings by degrees restored Cesario to himself: he yielded to that cheating confidence in the character of Beatrice which had so fatally ensnared him hitherto; and suddenly recollecting the facility with which she pardoned Giovanni's unqualified censures and unsubmitting firmness, he exclaimed,—“ Oh, she will pardon me—I had forgotten her generosity to you.”

Giovanni turned away his face without speaking. It was not his wish to give a false colour to Beatrice, he was only solicitous to spare Cesario the complete shock of disappointment; and he endea-

voured, therefore, to separate approbation of her conduct from assurances of his belief that her resentful resolution could not continue ; if, indeed, her attachment had ever deserved the name of an affection.

Cesario was not in a mood to scrutinize phrases ; these guarded expressions, therefore, went unnoticed by him. He passed from one violent emotion to another, and saw nothing distinctly but the images of former happiness.

From each of these, he not only drew arguments for reliance upon Beatrice, but reasons for regarding her more fondly. Instances of former devotedness to him, of disinterested, generous, what he thought self-sacrificing love, rose before him, and filled his heart with a transport of tender gratitude. He magnified the idols of rank and riches only that he might find Beatrice admirable in having despised them for his sake ; yet, had he questioned his own heart, how pitiful would such a

sacrifice have seemed to it, if required as a proof of its devotion !

While Giovanni listened to this torrent of delusions, he was wrung with compassion ; and, conscious how soon all must change into bitterness, he felt it harder to command his feelings now, than when he saw Cesario actually in the grasp of misery.

At a very late hour they parted ; Giovanni, to lead the devotions of his household ; and Cesario, to resign himself to the idea of an earthly object, little calculated to draw him on to nobler meditations.

The next day carried the friends to the Palazzo Rosso : the Marchesa was not risen, and her daughter was therefore mistress of the next hour.

She received Cesario in that cabinet which has for two centuries since, been the admiration of Europe. Giovanni declined entering till the first embarrassment of their meeting should have subsided.

It was not long ere he was called in.

“Giovanni!” exclaimed Cesario on his entrance, “now do I demand all the succours of your friendship! — help me to understand Beatrice — to understand myself — what is it I have done? — am I indeed deserving? — think for me — judge me — for *I* can no longer think.” — He struck his forehead with his clasped hand as he spoke, and looked wildly round, as if indeed under the influence of temporary madness.

Giovanni stood where this address had arrested him, and fixing his eyes on Beatrice with an air of severe virtue, said firmly, “You do not mean me to understand that the Signora can, upon reflection, persist in her senseless anger of last night?”

“Yes! — she renounces me — she will not forgive — she refuses——” Cesario’s frantic and disjointed answer was interrupted by Beatrice, who put aside her

veil, and, directing an expressive glance at Giovanni, exclaimed, —

“ Do not *you* condemn me, Signor Cigala ; I am sick of the world, and am determined to leave it. O do not think I would pain *your* friend, if my own perpetual misery were not ——”

“ Perpetual misery !” echoed Cesario, “ what do I hear ?—some demon in the shape of a confessor, I suppose, has terrified her with preposterous threatenings ; and now she fancies it piety to renounce me. —

“ Giovanni ! you that are skilled in all the learning of the schools, talk to her ; convince her that it is not a work to gain heaven by, that of breaking a fond and faithful heart !”

Cesario’s voice was choked by a thousand melting feelings, and walking into the other apartment to recover himself, he gave Giovanni a few moments for unrestrained speech.

“ Madam !” said the latter, firmly

grasping the wrist of Beatrice, "in the name of God I adjure you, act fairly with my friend in this last struggle between his faithful and your estranged heart! Act without artifice; and as you hope for mercy in your dying hour, be just to him: to delude him on, is to cheat him of his youth — of all that ardent youth prompts him to pursue and win. Have the courage to be hated by him; — if you do indeed no longer love him, tell him so, and set him free; I then will be his anchorage. My heart wants nothing but friendship."

"Oh barbarian!" exclaimed the distracted Beatrice, catching his arm as he turned away, "gentle to every other creature, harsh, cruel, merciless to me only! Why will you thus wring from me, what shame ——?" A burning blush covered her face as she broke off; and the very action of averting her eyes said more than if she had looked on him.

Giovanni shook her off, as he would have done a serpent ; and, springing into the apartment to which Cesario had retired, he took hold of him.

“ Let us go,” he cried, with the command of a superior being ; “ this is no place for you ; I cannot move her.”

Cesario would have resisted, but there was a strength in Giovanni’s grasp which defied resistance, and ere the former was aware of it he found himself in the open street.

During the first hour of their conversation, Cesario’s despair mastered his reason : he raved alternately against Beatrice’s unkindness, Giovanni’s fastidious observation of her, and his own folly in acting by the advice of one so prejudiced.

Giovanni gave the storm way, till, exhausted by his own violence, Cesario sunk into speechless dejection.

It was then that his friend began, with the tenderest care, to prepare his mind for a final separation from this too-fondly

considered object; he ventured to discuss the nature of true courage, which is better displayed by enduring misfortune nobly, than by contending victoriously in the field.

He reminded him of his father's memory, and of his own fair fame; he enlarged on these, as motives for exertion, assuring him, that each foregone gallant action was an additional pledge to his country of future services.

He tried to re-awaken in him that honourable ambition which seeks distinction by the path of usefulness; and, if he ventured to speak of his own conduct under similar disappointment, he did it, not as proposing himself for an example of fortitude, but as a proof that happiness is attainable, after the loss of one, whom, however we may have prized, we must eventually condemn.

He closed his exhortations, by advising Cesario to write to Beatrice, and try once more to shake her purpose; if her reply

were still inexorable, he recommended him then to quit Genoa with him.

While he described the characters of several individuals of the order for which they hoped to draw the defensive sword, and enlarged on the spirit-stirring scenes in which they might so soon be engaged together, he communicated a momentary enthusiasm to Cesario: the eyes of that unhappy young man kindled with all their former fire, but that fire lasted not; and he sank again into lifeless despondency.

“I will at least have one triumph over her!” he said, after a long and dismal silence,—“the world shall never know her cruelty. It may continue to believe that I was a presumptuous fool—that she never loved me!”—He sighed as if his heart were rent in twain by the sigh, and relapsed into a gloomy reverie.

Giovanni's entreaties that he would rouse himself, brought him out of this trance of despair; he seized a pen and wrote to Beatrice.

He wrote long, and wildly, but in the midst of lamentation and complaint, he declared his purpose of accompanying his friend immediately to Malta, assuring her, that beyond the loyal breast of that friend, and the Prince of Melfi, the secret of her professed attachment to him should never transpire : that he was then going to exact from the prince a promise of that sort, which would leave Beatrice to bestow herself, uncensured by the world, upon some happier man than him who had loved her only too well.

Giovanni could not condemn any part of this letter ; its generosity affected him ; and he dispatched it, though neither hoping nor wishing that the foolish Beatrice might be moved by its passionate pleadings.

The answer was such as he expected — embarrassed and agitated ; evidently written under a humiliating sense of shame, which she strove to cover by confused allusions to her duty as a daughter,

by resentment of Cesario's displeasure at what she called the strongest proof of her regard, and by declarations of her inclination for a religious life.

She concluded with a prayer for Cesario's happiness and honour; and repeating her resolution to take the veil, bade him an eternal farewell.

Even till this moment Cesario believed himself entirely convinced that his situation was desperate, but he now found that some hope had glimmered through all that darkness; this letter extinguished it: this selfish, unrelenting, ungenerous letter, — when he closed it, he felt as if his heart were withered for ever.

He remained sitting where he had read it, with his eyes fixed upon the vellum; though he no longer took cognisance of the characters, he heard the voice of Giovanni uttering, at times, a few words of courage and comfort.

The quarter carillons of the churches rang their musical chimes again and

again, before the unhappy young man regained any consciousness to things around him: when he did so, he recovered himself with a heavy sigh, and laying his chilly hand on the arm of Giovanni, said, with a wintry smile,

“Let us go now, Giovanni—let us leave Genoa together—if you can bear with such a wretch as I am.”

Giovanni's reply was an embrace full of his afflicted soul. Cesario rather yielded to, than returned it; but ere he rose from the neck of that incomparable friend, he gave him one convulsive, expressive pressure, and sighing again from the very depth of his heart, left him for solitude and struggle.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN they met next, it was not to talk of Beatrice, for Cesario avoided her name, but to settle the time and mode of their departure.

Cesario confessed his eagerness to be gone ; but, as Giovanni had many dependants to consider, and arrangements to make, in case he never might return, it was not possible for him to depart so suddenly.

He was, besides, under obligation to assist at the celebration of a marriage which he had made between a ward of his father's and the heir of a noble family.

This was one of those disagreeable necessities which the world imposes upon us: one of those cases when we cannot

assign our reason for a disinclination to do what the world expects from us, in compliance with its usual forms.

The public service upon which he was going to volunteer, did not require his immediate presence; and his private reason (a heart aching for his friend) was not to be given in consideration of the Brignoletti family. It was therefore painfully incumbent on Giovanni to appear through all the ceremonies and festivities of these nuptials; and it was agreed between them that Cesario should go to Civita Vecchia, and wait there the arrival of his friend; after which, they were to embark together for Malta.

A letter of gratitude, and respect, and affection was the only return Cesario could make to the warm-hearted Prince of Melfi. He had not fortitude to support a personal leave-taking with the man whom he had last seen when his brightest hopes were shining. He claimed secrecy from the prince, with relation to Beatrice;

and pledging himself henceforth to devote his whole heart to glory, he prayed His Highness to grant him that leave for accompanying Giovanni to Malta, which he so lately promised.

Doria's reply was written with kindly indulgence to the first disappointment of an ardent nature. He commended his resolution of seeking forgetfulness of a capricious mistress, even "at the cannon's mouth;" and, enclosing him the official permission he asked, bade him adieu.

Cesario had little more to do after this in Genoa. The friendly kinsman, under whose roof he dwelt, regretted, but could not blame his eagerness to seek military employment. "Arms are his profession," thought the Syndic, "and if we mean to advance in any way of life, we must not stand still." With this sagely self-evident proposition, he gave Cesario his parting benediction, coupled with the hope of soon seeing him return.

Cesario would not trust himself with a sight of his father's monument: yet, twice he went to San Siro, twice he put his foot upon the threshold, and as often turned away in a paroxysm of bitter recollection. It was in that church, near that very monument, Beatrice had first condemned him to despair! How then could he bear to look on it?

But his filial heart recompensed itself amply in the chapel at the Marino. There, where the actual remains of that dear father reposed, he gave way to every tender recollection; and felt himself once more all the son.

"O, that I had never loved aught but thee!" he cried in bitterness of soul, as he embraced the cold marble which covered that sainted dust. He forgot Giovanni at that moment; but in the phrenzies of betrayed love, even friendship is forgotten.

Cesario left Genoa on the very day of Giulio Carega's marriage with the ward

of Giovanni ; and though proposing soon to follow, his friend contemplated with distaste, nearly amounting to disgust, the mask and supper at which he must appear in the evening. Mirth, indeed, is mockery to “ a mind diseased.”

Giovanni saw, with regret, that Cesario went not in such utter desolation of soul as he professed to do : for Giovanni knew how fallacious was the hope which began again to cheat that sanguine spirit ; and aware that his friend’s future peace was only to be purchased by total despair now, he would not fan a kindling hope by one breath of indulgence.

He spoke to Cesario of Beatrice, as of one cut off from him for ever by her own unjustifiable act ; he called on him, therefore, to show his attachment had been grounded on the belief, at least, of excellence in her ; and he conjured him to recollect by what a degrading artifice she had prevented her mother’s interference with their engagement.

This last argument was the deadly probe: so sensitive was Cesario's wounded delicacy, that he scarcely endured the salutary point of that probe, even from the apprehensive hand of friendship.—Starting at that part of the subject, with a look which convinced Giovanni that he must not press it again, and stifling a throb of momentary resentment, Cesario seized his friend's hand, wrung it in both his, burst into an agonised groan, and departed.

He returned once more (almost mechanically) to the Syndic's; but there was nothing there to detain him—no letter, no message! When he found himself actually on the road from Genoa, and became convinced that Beatrice would not recall him, his amazed senses nearly deserted him. He was tempted to ride back, go to her, implore her, die before her! To live without her, he believed impossible; but yet it was easier for him to die, than to bend his insulted

spirit to a recantation of what had offended her.

Neither pride nor principle would let him do otherwise than assert his displeasure at the stratagem by which she blinded her mother. That she could have mocked his love, and ridiculed its pretensions, was something so gross, so unworthy, so incompatible with the idolatry of true attachment, that he never thought of it without indignation.

Contrition, indeed, might have effaced that hateful impression of art and indelicacy; but Beatrice had defended her conduct, and braved his anger: and where was he to find security, if the wife to whom he confided his honour, were guided by such pernicious policy?

As these reflections crowded on him, Cesario's paroxysm of relenting fondness died away: but again, and again it returned. He granted something to her pride, and more to maidenly modesty: perhaps she wished to recall him, yet was

restrained by these two motives (motives generally termed honourable to a woman so circumstanced); perhaps even now she was given up to greater despair than he was:—for how passionately did she once return his affections!

If she had really ceased to prefer him, why should she express such a distaste to life? why should she not remain in the world, enjoying the bright season of her youth and beauty? why should she seek to fly other admirers?—but if she were only chilled to him by resentment of his supposed offence, and consequent doubt of his affection, why then her tenderness must return with the conviction of his truth.

Cesario was amazed that he had never seen the subject in this light before; he even wondered that Giovanni had not urged it on him. Certain facts spoke for themselves: Beatrice had not shown favour to any other man; and she was, in the very May-morning of life, with

all its golden prospects before her, going to immure herself in a convent !

So instantaneous a blaze of hope blinded Cesario to every thing else : he now saw but one object—the blissful reunion to which it directed him ; and, all Beatrice's errors forgotten, all his own feelings, all Giovanni's reasonings, he determined to throw himself upon the good offices of Signor Calva.

With this purpose, and already abandoned to the utmost joy of his sanguine nature, Cesario changed his route, and galloped to the country-house of Beatrice's cousin.

He found the Signor at home, but his wife was at Genoa. Cesario's errand was soon told ; after which Signor Calva, having first professed his readiness to serve him, took the liberty of questioning him upon several particulars. He testified peculiar curiosity about all that had passed between Cesario and his friend on the subject of Beatrice ; at each detail

making some significant motion of the head or shoulders.

Signor Calva was one of those good-natured, well-meaning persons, who see parts of a subject very clearly, but have not discernment enough to take in the whole of any. He judged every event and character by common rules; and, as his measure could not stretch to any thing beyond the ordinary standard of human conduct, he was, consequently, sometimes mistaken.

The character of Giovanni Cigala entirely passed the bounds of his comprehension; so that he more readily imagined his friendship failing before the seductions of youth and beauty, than a well-educated young woman, like the Signora Brignoletti, shamelessly breaking from one lover to woo another.

The Signor's principles were not so nice, or so consistent, as to condemn with the same severity the same conduct in different persons. If a man's vices, or

a woman's frailties, did not injure either his honour or happiness, he considered them as every-day matters. Thus, he could be very indignant at one particular action, and yet tolerate the performer of it. In short, he resented or excused every dereliction from high principle, just so far as it affected himself or his friends. He thought he had reason to think Giovanni no longer true in one point to Cesario, and that falseness he believed it right to detect : but he never suspected that by asserting this, he was doing more than accusing Giovanni of some mere natural frailties ; he was pronouncing him to be one of the most odious impostors that ever cheated under the mask of virtue.

Believing Cesario more the dupe of his friend than of his mistress, yet imagining him deceived by both, he thought it an act of good-nature to show him the double imposition ; and, by that warning, afford him an opportunity and motive for

being beforehand with the dissemblers, by breaking with the lady, and treating his rival with the contempt he merited.

In this feeling he spoke ; meaning well, acting ill.

Oh ! the responsibility we take on ourselves, when we attempt to shake the confidence of another ! Long should we ponder on it, widely should we survey every part of the character we are about to make an object of suspicion ! Which of us, indeed, dare give our own conjectures in the place of facts ?

Signor Calva had but his own imperfect observations and hasty fancies to warrant him in what he thought ; yet he rashly uttered those thoughts, and laid waste two hearts which were lately all affection and trust.

“ So, it was Signor Cigala who first advised you and Beatrice to acknowledge your mutual engagement to the Marchesa ? ” he observed, drily : “ the consequence he must have foreseen — the

Marchesa's prohibition of her daughter's intercourse with you : for, besides other objections, she would be incensed past forgiveness by your joint concealment of it. I cannot admire *that* part of his advice : but, perhaps, he calculated upon keeping up your mutual attachment by charging himself with your several billets ; for he, of course, would not have been exiled. Then he does not counsel you to try your fate again with Beatrice ? He thinks you had better give her up at once, and go with him to Malta ?—but he does not go, after all ; he remains for these marriage-festivities (which I used to fancy he would despise) at the Carega Palace.”

Signor Calva paused frequently during this speech, and looked significantly at Cesario : he looked still more significantly when he concluded it. The heart of the latter was dull in the science of suspicion ; he read no particular meaning in the Signor's large round eyes, but re-

plied simply, "He will follow me when they are over. Giovanni does not counsel me to try Beatrice again, because he judges her strange conduct with severity, perhaps I ought to say, with justice. Indeed, he is so displeased with her, that I fear he does not wish her to recal me."

"I believe it," observed the Signor, more drily than before. He waited for some remark from Cesario, but the latter, absorbed in recollection, not making any, he resumed.

"And, if I go upon this embassy for you, Signor Adimari, what terms am I to propose? Still the avowal of your engagement, or unconditional submission?"

"O, nothing! nothing that can alarm Beatrice, or threaten us with separation. Tell her, I am content to endure months of penance for my fault — to wear out my life in expectation, so she will but allow me to see one bright hope at the end of it. Oh! let her but receive me

again into her heart, and consent to hear me pour my soul out at her feet—" Cesario broke off, ashamed of his folly. Signor Calva rested his hand on his shoulder, with a mixed feeling of concern for him, and vexation at his credulity.

" I am heartily sorry to put an end to these sanguine feelings of your's," he said, " but I really do not believe my visit to Beatrice would produce any good. My wife and I have not been stupid observers : we long ago suspected that her inclinations had changed their object ; and now we are convinced of it. It was this suspicion which made us withdraw from our house in town."

" Changed their object !" repeated Cesario, in wild, incredulous astonishment. " You cannot mean it ! — What man does she receive with any distinction ?"

" What man has she pardoned, again and again, for doubting the sincerity of

her intentions in your favour?" asked Calva, in a lowered voice. "What man has she allowed to rebuke, to control, almost to govern her?"

"Ha!" cried Cesario, flashing round on him, "have a care, signor!" — and he grasped the hilt of his sword, as if instinctively prompted to avenge this insinuation against his friend.

"I have done!" said the signor, somewhat chagrined at what he thought ingratitude for his good intentions. "I can have no interest in it; time will show" — and opening a trelliced door, he went out into his garden.

Cesario stood a moment or two, breathless with indignation; then, struck at once by a multitude of hideous recollections, he rushed after the signor. "Explain yourself," he cried; "I demand explanation. What infernal suspicion would your words — Giovanni false! Giovanni! — Speak, signor!"

"I have no absolute proofs to bring

you ;” replied Calva, “ but evidence, which, in my mind, amounts to proof. — Have you temper to hear it ?”

“ Temper !” ejaculated Cesario, pressing his hand tightly on his convulsed heart, — “ Go on, signor.”

Calva sat down on a rustic bench, and Cesario threw himself beside him.

The former then began to recapitulate all Giovanni’s deep attention to the looks, words, and actions of the Signora Brignoletti during their first acquaintance at his house ; from which time, he said, both he and his wife had since remarked that her partiality for Cesario began to decline.

He then proceeded to describe Beatrice’s violent agony when she heard the story of the banditti ; and he bade Cesario remember, that her first words, on recovering from her swoon on that occasion, were, not thanksgiving and joy for *his* safety, but eager enquiry after his friend.

Cesario started under the pressure of Signor Calva's fingers at this suggestion, as if he had received the shock of a torpedo: his countenance changed horribly—but he spoke not. The signor resumed.

His next argument was drawn from the strange scene they had all witnessed between her and Giovanni, at San Pietro d'Arena; what followed, when Beatrice and Cesario were afterwards alone together, the signor knew not; but he ventured to challenge her lover's recollections of that interview, feeling sure they would corroborate what he suggested.

Cesario's recollections were now indeed beginning to compose: they prest on him so fast and thick, that he dared not look upon them. "I cannot remember—— I will not think—— No more——no more, for the love of God!"—and starting up, he took some hasty steps

across the path — then, as hastily returning, he besought the signor to proceed.

Calva was now sincerely sorry for what he had done, and was very unwilling to proceed ; but Cesario's impatience was so inflamed by opposition, that the signor, still thinking he was doing a duty, though an unpleasant one, conquered what he considered a weakness, and went on.

He had previously drawn enough from Cesario, to have those additional proofs at his command, which might be said to consist in the facility with which Beatrice yielded to, and the authority with which Giovanni uttered any counsel or reproof: her extreme repugnance to the avowal of her engagement with Cesario, might be dated from her acquaintance with Giovanni; and her present notion of taking the veil could be only the desperate resource of a person resolved not to act as she ought, and ashamed of acting as she wished.

“ And where is Giovanni’s perfidy !” exclaimed the life-struck Cesario, yet clinging to the last dearest object, in this wreck of all that was precious to him, “ if Beatrice indeed ——”

“ You do not fancy my cousin’s affections could have changed of themselves ?” interrupted the signor. “ Think better of her, and of yourself ! We may hope for the honour of the sex, that your friend’s passion was the first to break through the bounds I have no doubt they began by prescribing to themselves.”

“ My friend ! Giovanni !” repeated Cesario, in a hollow voice, fixing his eyes with glazy vacancy of look on the face of his companion.

“ You cannot doubt the Cavaliere Cigala’s passion,” resumed the signor, “ when you recal his continued anxiety to wean your heart from Beatrice. No man of common experience expects much sense or prudence amongst women, and

he could not really condemn such a pretty, spoiled thing for the little thoughtless follies he reprehended so severely. How could you be so blind? Then his insisting upon her dutiful avowal to her mother, was evidently meant only to extort the Marchesa's positive command for her to break with you. They have not, however, had patience to wait for that; it is broken off, upon that childish pretence, (your un-lover-like ill-humour,) and you are now on your way to death or glory. Signor Cigala, however, remains: he and Beatrice meet this night at the Palazzo Carega: I know it for a fact."

" 'Tis false !" exclaimed Cesario, starting up, maddened by successive agonies of doubt, conviction, and despair: the next instant he staggered a few paces, and fell against one of the trees: he was for some moments quite insensible.

" If I were a choleric man," said the

signor, when Cesario showed signs of consciousness, “that expression of yours might have been fatal to one or other of us; but I allow for your present irritation, Adimari; and I do assure you, that I wish I had not burned my fingers with this business. You know how cordially both my wife and I espoused your interests for your own sake, as much as for our pretty cousin, (though all the time I blamed myself for countenancing any thing clandestine;) you know how greatly we admired your friend; and you cannot suppose, therefore, that we would have withdrawn ourselves from the Signora Brignoletti at the period of her mother’s illness, (if from all that I have told you, and from various trifling circumstances which women observe amongst each other, because *they* know their meaning,) if we had not become convinced that Beatrice meant to play you false! I do sincerely believe Signor Cigala to be a noble fellow; at least

that he has done his best to struggle against what has conquered greater saints and philosophers than himself ; but he is flesh and blood, like the rest of us ; and Beatrice's eyes are not to be resisted, especially when there is love in their glances."

"Madness ! torture !" exclaimed the frantic Cesario, " I have heard enough, — but stay — when, said you, they were to meet ?" Signor Calva proceeded, not only to repeat when, but to detail the odd chance by which he had discovered their intended meeting.

That very morning, a woman employed to make festival habits, had sent by mistake, a Spanish gypsey's dress, designed for the Signora Brignoletti, to the Signora Calva, instead of some other which the latter lady had ordered.

When this person came to repair her error, she prayed the signora to keep the discovery to herself, as the young lady had sworn her to secrecy ; fearing the

indecorum of going to a mask at the Palazzo Carega, when her mother was yet but partially recovered.

To Beatrice, indeed, who was drugged with similar pleasures, this mask could have but one attraction, the presence of Giovanni: and who, therefore, could imagine that any thing but his more than avowed sympathy with her attachment, his absolute importunities, could have led her into the imprudence of going thus clandestinely, where she must go without a protector?

The inference was too obvious. Cesario stood rivetted where this conviction first struck him; in outward appearance he appeared stupefied; but in fact his thoughts were flying, with the rapidity of light, from point to point of this horrid subject; now believing, now rejecting every startling circumstance which made against the fidelity of his friend.

“Proof—and proof only!” he said at

last, in a determined voice. “I will see them together, or I will not believe. Signor Calva, I thank you for your intentions: from my soul I believe you mean me well, but you may be mistaken; and you cannot blame me for resolving to rely only upon the evidence of my own senses. If Giovanni be false—if he has deceived me but in one, the smallest atom, then is heaven false and hell true.”

“Well, then, you mean to go to the Palazzo Carega?” asked Calva: I’ll accompany you—our masks will conceal us, if we choose they shall do so; and there can be no sin in coming at the truth by any means.”

A very short time was required to fix the necessary arrangement. Signor Calva now made it a point of honour to substantiate his accusations; and Cesario was in that state of feverish impatience which hurries its unhappy victim on to the very conviction he dreads to find.

Signor Calva was to join his wife in Genoa, as he had engaged to do, ere she left him. He was then to prepare a mask and domino for Cesario, who was to accompany him to the Palazzo Carega; then, they were to separate, and singly watch the two persons whose conduct there must stamp or efface their suspicions.

This settled, they parted : Signor Calva to quarrel with himself for his officious interference (since he lamented the pain he had inflicted); and Cesario, to tread back that labyrinth of deception and horror into which he had been forcibly led.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL the arguments urged by Signor Calva to prove the mutual understanding between Giovanni and Beatrice, were now powerfully supported by Cesario's own recollections : it explained all Beatrice's inconsistencies, and Giovanni's austerity,—that austerity which was so incomprehensible to him. It did not seem assumed. O that seemed!—there lay the damning solution of the mystery.

It was plain they had both counterfeited : Beatrice loved Giovanni, Giovanni loved her. Cesario believed he could have forgiven him that love, had he avowed it frankly ; but to endeavour at undermining *his* attachment to her, by counterfeiting displeasure at venial

faults; to lay a plot to get him banished from the Marchesa's house; was a treachery to which Cesario felt that not even love, all-powerful as it was over his heart, could have made him subservient.

Yet, was it not possible, after all, that Giovanni might detest his own frailty, and determine to refuse the happiness he must purchase with the life's blood of his friend. Might not Beatrice, too, rather resolve to sacrifice her bloom to a cloister, than plant such a dagger in the breast she once joyed to reign over? Their meeting to-night might be intended for a last farewell! if so, Cesario might still retain a remnant of happier days; esteem of what had once possessed every affection of his soul.

Friendship and love were indeed too strong within him, for one blow, however violent, to dislodge them. He clung to this fond fancy, the moment it appeared; and the romantic wish of proving himself

more generous than his friend and mistress were unkind, happily arose to divide his heart.

He now determined to see Giovanni at his own house; there to tell him, openly, what he knew and imagined of his smothered passion for Beatrice: he would then learn how far she returned that passion, and if entirely, he resolved to resign her to him.

Filled with this deceitful idea of his moral strength, and unconscious of his own insincerity, Cesario hastened to retake the road to the Marino. As he went along, his busy thoughts pictured the scene he was about to go through, in a thousand varieties. Had he reflected on the nature of those day-dreams, it would have awakened him from his trance of self-delusion: they were prompted by his secret hopes, as much as by his wishes; they were all full of high-wrought enthusiasm and generous sacrifice. They represented himself in a struggle of agony

and devotedness, and Giovanni, overpowered by his heroism. They ended, how? — by the conquest of principle over the two hearts which passion had led astray. Thus, however they began, they concluded in Cesario's restoration to the affections of his mistress; and the sacrifice he meditated, was therefore but one of those vain visions of impracticable romance, which, only those indulge, who know not the tyranny of love, and the weakness of youth.

The day had been far advanced, when Cesario encountered Signor Calva; it was far spent ere he reached the Marino. Giovanni was not there: he was gone, his domestics said, into Genoa, purposing to remain for the mask at the Palazzo Carega.

Chilled and disappointed, Cesario hastened to Genoa. Giovanni was not at his house even there; he might be already at the Palazzo Carega; or he might

have gone out, in consequence of a billet brought him by an unknown person.

Cesario's false courage was nearly exhausted; and this second check to the feverish ardour with which he sought explanation, extinguished it at once.

This billet, the servant mentioned, came most likely from Beatrice. They *were* to meet at the Count Carega's. Ah well! then there was no self-sacrifice purposed by either of them; *he* was to be the sacrifice.

Crushed at once, all the romantic mixture of struggle and transport with which he had so lately medicined his sick soul, vanished like a broken spell: the wretched Cesario turned, to go, he knew not whither; and turning, found himself by the side of Signor Calva.

The Signor, guessing something of his feelings, uttered but a few words of friendly salutation, and led him to his own residence.

Cesario scarcely spoke during the interval which elapsed between this rencontre and the fête at the Palazzo Carega.

The Signora Calva, having made one of the bridal party through the day, appeared not to interrupt, or rather relieve her husband in his fruitless attempt at reconciling Cesario to his fate. The latter was again abandoned to a trance of rapid, incoherent thought.

Yet, though dead to every other thing, he heard and registered all that Signor Calva continued to urge in support of his destructive opinion : and when the hour came for joining the lively groupes at the Palazzo Carega, he threw on his disguise with breathless eagerness.

Many masks were assembled, when Cesario followed Signor Calva into the principal saloon of the Palazzo : the bridal party were easily distinguished by the fancy and splendour of their dresses : —

Giovanni alone was magnificent with simplicity.

He wore a suit of pliant amber-coloured leather, richly damasked with pearls; over which a loose cloke of azure silk served but to mark the noble movements of his figure.

He was reclining along the lowest step of a sort of throne, where the bride was seated: his head raised, and inclined back to address her at the moment of Cesario's entrance, gave, by that action, a peculiar grace to his whole person.

The benevolent satisfaction of his heart was diffused over his countenance; yet was there a sweet heaviness in his eyes, perhaps more touching than their usual cloudless serenity.

Cesario's distempered fancy attributed this expression to the soft reveries of love, while in fact it proceeded from suppressed sorrow for him.

Never before had Cesario examined his friend's figure with the gaze of jea-

lousy ; and never before, therefore, had he remarked all its symmetry.

“ What sorcery blinded me till now ! ” he exclaimed, half-aloud, as he stood gazing on him. “ How could I believe that perfection of manly grace was dead to the passion he must inspire ? — how could I suppose, that my wretched self might ever bear comparison —— ” He stopped, overcome with shame at this humiliating idea ; for, was it possible to lament the woman, whose heart was either to be won or lost by mere exterior ?

His ready heart had an answer for that also ; it told him, that in character he was as inferior to Giovanni as in person.

Signor Calva drew near him at that moment. “ Leave me, I pray of you,” said the latter hastily, ere he could address him. “ I can scarcely endure my own thoughts, much less any society. I would not be shackled.”

The good-tempered Calva motioned

acquiescence, and mingled with the crowd.

Cesario remained where he left him, till the increasing influx of masks disturbed his meditations, and obstructed his view. He then changed his place; and, during that change, Giovanni escaped him.

Cesario looked round in every direction; but pillars, arches, groupes of statuary intervened, and Giovanni was no longer discernible. He then gathered his large domino round him, and hastened where he thought it most likely for Giovanni and Beatrice to meet.

He got by degrees through the long suite of saloons, perpetually stayed and irritated by the persecutions of the fantastic groupes peopling those superb apartments. He turned back from the seventh room, nearly frantic with impatience: for no where could he see the lofty head of Giovanni towering above others; no where could he discern that

Moresco shawl, with which he was told the glittering ringlets of Beatrice were to be disguised.

Had they met? Had they left the Palazzo together?

Almost breathless with the rapidity of his movements, and the torture of his mind, he was standing in a maze of perplexity, when the Signora Calva came up to him.

“I am very sorry,” she whispered, “that my husband talked to you of our wrong-headed little cousin; but now, as you ought to be convinced, I advise you to go into the gardens: I saw Signor Cigala and Beatrice there, by the grotto of Arethusa, not a quarter of an hour since.”

The Signora did not wait reply, and Cesario was not able to give one. For a moment or two his limbs failed under him, and he had to support himself by catching at a pillar of the orchestra; but immediately afterwards, new-strung

by despair, he sprang forward, and struggled through the crowd.

Signor Calva, who was watching him from a distance, marked the wild flashings of his eye, as it turned from side to side, lest the objects he sought should pass him unseen ; and quietly making his way up to him, he followed unobserved.

Cesario entered the gardens : they were partially illuminated ; some walks, however, were left to their own deep umbrage and the silver moonlight. Through these darker shades the tremulous gleam of water was visible, but not a foot was yet heard to disturb their solitudes.

The other avenues were blazing with coloured lamps, and thronged with figures : from those Cesario turned, loathing. He flew to the grotto of Arethusa ; but it was vacant : he rushed out of it, and looked round. Before him lay several open groves and glades, and behind him

a deep shade of sycamores, skreening one of the lesser entrances.

He stood troubled and doubtful which path to take. As he paused, he was startled by the sound of unequal steps among the sycamores, and the next moment he heard the peculiar voice of Beatrice.

“No, Giovanni!” she said, in a tone of distraction; “I feel now that I never loved Cesario. I was grateful, and I pitied him—pitied his misfortunes too. Would I have done for *his* sake what I now do for yours? Oh! be assured I never loved him.”

At the last words, Cesario uttered a terrible cry, and rushed forwards. His hand was on his sword; but in drawing it, his foot entangled in the folds of his domino, and, betrayed equally by the slippery grass and by his own agitation, he fell to the ground. Doubtless some other person had interrupted and alarmed

Beatrice; she fled precipitately; and the uproar of maskers within the gardens, and of lacqueys without, must have prevented Giovanni from recognising the voice of his friend: for having first stooped for a bracelet which Beatrice had dropped, and which, if lifted by another, might sully her reputation, he went out by the same door through which she had darted to her hired carriage.

Signor Calva, meanwhile, was prompt in assisting Cesario; but, in doing so, he had the address to make a sign to one in the company, who obeyed it by conveying away the sword which caused Cesario's fall. "Command yourself!" whispered the signor, stooping to his ear, and forcibly holding on the wretched young man's mask, which he was on the point of tearing off. "Be guarded, for the sake of the Signora's family." Cesario ceased at that appeal: he rose from the ground without speaking, at the same

time impelling the signor forward into the grove.

The short path through that mere skirting of trees led them to an open door, beyond which they saw the street, and a throng of pages with flambeaux.

"They must have gone out this way," said the signor, as he passed with him out of the door.

"And together!" muttered Cesario, "I will follow to his house." And he tried to shake off the arm of his companion.

The stifled tone in which he spoke, had something so portentous in it, that the signor grasping him more firmly, insisted upon accompanying him wherever he went.

Cesario contested the point almost fiercely, but Calva was too resolute in his determination to be got rid of; Cesario, therefore, yielded to the impulse he gave, and went home with him.

He preserved a gloomy silence, during

all the signor's exhortations to patience ; and calls on him for a spirited display of indifference on the loss of such a friend and mistress were unheard. Calva spoke like a common man, to one but slightly affected by a common passion : he was used to see lovers discarded and hearts change ; he was used also to the first burst of jealous rage ; and he dreaded only its first burst. He was, consequently, assiduous to keep the rivals separate, till the resentment of the supplanted, should have time to cool into contempt.

Cesario's share in the conversation went little beyond an occasional monosyllable ; condemning himself to the penance of appearing to listen, in gratitude for the signor's well-intended kindness. In fact, he only heard the irritating hum of a voice, without yielding attention to what it uttered.

When he thought he had endured this long enough for propriety, he rose from his seat. " Allow me now to retire,"

he said, commanding his fluctuating colour for an instant. "I want rest — to-morrow we may consult together: you have promised me shelter for to-night."

The signor was deceived by that air of composure which persons under the most violent agony of grief sometimes assume with the cunning of insanity, to lull suspicion of their fatal purpose.

He took a light; and having conducted his impatient guest to a chamber, repeated his exhortations, and bade him, good-night.

As the signor departed, Cesario shot the bolt of his door. He listened with gasping anxiety, till the steps of Calva were no longer audible: then a wild and savage joy thrilled through him: for he was free!—free, to seek the revenge his soul thirsted for.

With one spring he cleared the balcony of his window into the garden; scaled its high wall; and was at the door of Giovanni's house in the Strada

Lomellino, without having once paused to take breath. He passed the servant who let him in, without a question. The man knew him too well, to give him any interruption, or to apprehend any thing from the fierceness and strangeness of his entry. Cesario, therefore, took the lofty staircase at a bound, and burst into Giovanni's apartment.

Giovanni was sitting at a table, his face buried in his hands. His hair was all disordered, as if the actions of a perturbed spirit had scattered its broken masses.

So absorbed was he in painful thought, he did not hear the step of Cesario, as he sprang through the pillared entrance: he drew a profound sigh, and as he sighed, he looked up. He then saw Cesario standing opposite to him, with such an expression of misery and meltingness in his face; and that face so wan, that he almost took it for his appa-

rition. He half rose, ejaculating some pious adjuration.

“ Giovanni !” exclaimed Cesario, approaching him, all bewildered with the revulsion of feeling which the mere sight of him, thus sad and alone, had caused.

Giovanni knew then, that it was Cesario; and he was stretching out his hand to welcome him back, and to demand the reason of his re-appearance, when he saw his friend's countenance suddenly convulsed, and a demon's frown alter every feature.

“ Ha ! have I proof again !” he exclaimed, precipitating himself upon the table, and snatching from it the bracelet which Giovanni had so unfortunately taken up after it fell from the arm of Beatrice.

Cesario looked at this bracelet eagerly, intently ; then furiously dashing it on the floor, and trampling it under his feet, he cried out, “ There, cursed bauble ! — defend yourself, false man !” he con-

tinued, rushing upon Giovanni, and putting his hand to his side in search of his sword. The empty scabbard mocked his grasp: for he knew not what had passed in the grove at the Palazzo Carega.

His passions were now doubly inflamed by disappointed fury, and he darted his eyes round the room in the deadly hope of espying some weapon of offence.

At that moment, had Giovanni possessed ten thousand lives, Cesario would have thought them all too few to slake his gasping vengeance: he uttered some unconnected words of horrid import, accompanied by certain wandering movements of the eye and hand, which had an expression in them even more horrible than his words.

Giovanni, however, looked at him awhile with a fearless though afflicted aspect; then advancing, said,

“What fatal suspicion thus maddens

you?—You suspect me of perfidy, Cesario, and I am innocent; in the name of God, be less violent, and hear me.”

“ I waste no time in words,” exclaimed Cesario, fiercely repulsing him; “ answer me—did I not see you in the Carega gardens, this night, with Beatrice? did I not hear the vows of love pass between you? did I not hear her declare——shame on that shameless avowal! Away—away.”

“ Cesario, if these lips,—this heart—”

“ Hence! Mock my blind faith no longer;—I heard—I heard!—yon bracelet too,—I have kissed it on her arm a thousand times!—as you are a knight, lend me a sword,—here, in this spot, let us end one or both of us.—*I cannot*, and *you shall not* live beyond this hour.”

“ But hear me, Cesario; and if after that, you still thirst for my blood, why it is yours—all yours. I call Heaven to witness, (and I will prove it to you,) that

never by thought, word, nor deed, have I wronged you with Beatrice ; — is our bond of soul to be broken at last by a woman ? — No ! — she wrings it from me ; — and now I own, that her persecuting love, inflamed by my indifference ——”

“ Her persecuting love !” repeated Cesario ; “ her love ! — your indifference !” and he burst into a withering laugh : then with a terrible voice, — “ Infamous liar !” he exclaimed, advancing ; he raised his hand — was it a blow that fell ?

Giovanni’s shudder was audible as he started back : from another hand, that blow had been the watch-word of death ; but on Cesario, the wretched, misled Cesario, he only turned a look, such a look ! and ere the insult could be repeated, disappeared.

Cesario remained where Giovanni had left him, motionless in mind as in body. He might be said to have forgot himself to stone ! for he was only roused by the entrance of a domestic who came in by

chance. At sight of this person, recollection of what had just passed, flashed on him; but no longer feeling any of that devouring passion which demanded action, he started forward in silence, and casting round him a haggard look of amazement at what had happened, rushed from the scene.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE unhappy Cesario lost all memory of himself and others, for several weeks after this. When he recovered his recollection, he found himself in a convent among the Appennines, whither he had wandered in the delirium of despair.

He looked round and saw a narrow cell, with a single ray of light admitted at a narrow aperture ; it illuminated four stone-walls, without other furniture than a huge wooden crucifix, and the pallet he lay on.

That ray of light, however, streamed on the saintly figure of a monk, who sat by his rugged bed with the sacred volume on his knee.

Cesario addressed to him the first rational words he had uttered for several

weeks. The holy man started at the sound of his voice, closed his book, and approached nearer ; his face was covered with his cowl, but his breast heaved, and his hands trembled with kindly sympathy. He did not speak.

Cesario addressed him again : the monk bowed his head, crossed himself, pointed to his habit, then to heaven, and withdrew.

Cesario never saw that monk again. He was one of the order of La Trappe, and the rules of that rigid order forbid all intercourse by speech.

Its ministers did enough when they lifted the sick traveller and bound up his wounds ; to pour wine and oil into them, in consolation and counsel, was not in their instructions.

As Cesario recovered, the faded images of the past were renewed in his mind. He recollected all that Signor Calva had related to him, all that he had heard Beatrice say, and all that Giovanni had asserted :

he added to these recollections whatever he remembered of the separate conduct of these two suspected persons.

After this painful act of memory, and the reflections consequent on it, what a difference did he find between his regret of Beatrice and of his friend ! Giovanni's disaffection rankled sorely in his heart : the emotion Beatrice excited was perhaps more tempestuous, but it was neither so deep nor so enduring. The one grief came over him in gusts, but the other penetrated his whole soul with dreariness and desolation.

Let it not be understood that in thus displaying the difference of Cesario's feelings, I would condemn the legitimate sentiment of well-grounded honourable love. I speak not, in *his* case, of that sentiment, which, to intimate knowledge of its object, perfect assurance of her excellence, and complete security in her faith, superadds all that is necessary to distinguish it from friendship, and to join

the vivacity of passion to the durability of principle. I speak but of that wild misleading fire, which beauty only kindles, and vanity and imagination feed, till at last it seizes upon the heart.

That is the love which, in its bitterest hour of disappointment, can yet feel that there are griefs of more exceeding poignancy than its own : and such, though he knew it not, was the passion of Cesario ; such was the grief which he now found, overpowered by the loss of his friend.

There is an invincible something in truth, which no appearances can wholly conquer. Giovanni's looks, and words, and actions, returned upon Cesario with redoubled impression of their sincerity, every time they did return. The more he considered the former character and conduct of his friend, the more monstrous did his present apostasy appear : but alas, the longer he reflected upon Beatrice, the less reason did he find for believing that

her affections had been hardly won from him by subtle artifice. He thought of Count Cagliari, once so evidently favoured, then so soon dismissed; and his heart smote him with compunction.

‘They that slay with the sword shall perish by the sword’ — in more ways than its literal meaning is that awful threat applicable to the affairs of life!

To endure such a state of doubt was impossible to Cesario. Better, he thought, to plunge at once into complete despair; better to learn that both were utterly false, than thus linger round the ideas of a friend and a mistress in agonizing uncertainty, which was the tempter, which was the wilful cause of his wide and irremediable woe.

Cesario had seen Giovanni since that fatal night in the Carega gardens. Giovanni had offered him explanation and proof of integrity, and how had he put it to silence! His blood burned and froze in his veins. He would now see Beatrice,

and if *she* shrunk from his questionings, why then she was the perfidious one.

Yet, how foul was such an image! Beatrice the deceiver! Beatrice the wooer! It could not be! The tortured Cesario relapsed again into weakness and credulity.

There was happily, however, one recollection of power to dispel the brief illusion; and it came like the malignant whisper of some envious fiend: this was the recollection of her artifice with her mother.

Unable to bear the frequent recurrence of this degrading thought; and, perhaps unconsciously, desirous to learn all that was necessary to banish her at once from his heart, he resolved to go back again to Genoa, and satisfy himself completely.

The ardour of so justifiable a purpose gave a new impulse to his constitution; so that, in a very few days from that in which he first meditated this journey, he was able to undertake it.

During the period of his convalescence, he had learned nothing from the gloomy fraternity by whom he was attended. They glided before his eyes like noiseless spectres ; and when, at the close of the day, he passed the burial-ground of the convent, and beheld each dark figure employed in digging its grave, his distempered imagination almost fancied that he was himself a disembodied spirit, and doomed to eternal dreariness in that desolate region.

Forbidden to disturb the religious silence of his sad associates, he tasked his memory to discover how long he could have been in his present residence. The task was vain ; for the chain had been broken by a wild interval of delirium ; and all measure of time was thus lost.

He could but confusedly recollect having gone from Genoa, without caring or knowing whither he went ; hurrying from place to place, unmindful of food

and rest, unless forced on him by self-interested or benevolent persons.

His last consciousness was the act of sinking down, in a remote solitude, exhausted with fatigue and neglect of sustenance.

The remainder of this imperfect history of himself, he received from the superior of the convent, just as he departed; when the holy man used the discretionary power of speech vested in him by their rules, to recommend a life of monastic seclusion to one whom the world had evidently pierced.

Cesario's heart did not repel the gloomy exhortation; but ere he could divorce himself from life, with all its active duties and endearing bonds, he felt that a conviction of what he now *could* sometimes doubt, was absolutely necessary for that purpose.

After frankly stating his feelings, he learnt from the superior that he had been found on the road by a traveller

who brought him to the convent as the nearest shelter. The monks nursed him four weeks.

“What a period!” thought Cesario; “how much may have happened in it to finish my despair!”

The venerable father put into his hand a purse of ducats, which his benevolent preserver had left for his use.

Cesario eagerly enquired the traveller’s name. He had not told it, for none had asked it!

Cesario’s heart suffered a momentary chill: he had once been more proud than grateful; but events had changed him; and he felt this generous humanity from a stranger almost reconcile him to the world.

Having taken from the purse a few pieces of gold, sufficient for his fewer wants, he returned the remainder for charitable uses, besought the superior’s benediction, and departed.

It was the end of the carnival, when

Cesario re-entered Genoa ; and, as if to mock his misery, all was mirth and pageantry.

As he proceeded along the Strada Nuova, he saw but one house dark and silent ; it was the Palazzo Rosso. The Palazzo Rosso a blank, when all others were light and gaity ! What could have befallen its inhabitants ? — his ill-boding heart was busy with the images of Beatrice and Giovanni.

With hasty, but faltering steps, he presented himself at the gates. A servant whom he did not know, informed him that the Signora Beatrice had been near death, he was told ; and was now gone a journey with the Marchesa and their confessor. Cesario questioned the man further : the man was but a servant of servants, and knew nothing ; his superiors were all in the streets amongst the maskers.

More perplexed than ever by this intelligence, yet kindling with a wild and

vain hope, since Beatrice was yet under her mother's protection, he turned from their late abode in search of fuller information.

For the first moment or two, he thought of seeking Signor Calva; but the feelings associated with that officious friend, were too keen to bear renewal, and he turned his steps towards the Palazzo Doria.

Every Strada and Pico was thronged with people and pageantries. The balconies, and terraced roofs of the houses, were full of ladies attired in their gala dresses; some sparkling with jewels, some blooming with flowers, or panting under embroidery and brocade.

Here were the fooleries of pantomime represented on a temporary stage; there, bands of wandering musicians, playing under the colonades of public buildings. Jugglers, rope-dancers, reciters, were seen in every corner.

Now, rolled on a gilded car filled with allegorical personages, and followed by

troops of maskers in characters connected with the pageant before them : and now a band of young cavaliers, gallantly armed, and mounted on managed horses, went through a mimic joust.

One universal uproar of laughter, music, shouts, cries of momentary alarm, whirring of artificial fires, sound of trumpets, and ringing of bells, loaded the air.

Cesario's ears were stunned by the din : to him, all was discord, and all impertinence : the showers of sweetmeats and flowers, which fell on him in common with others, as he pushed through the crowd under the balconies, seemed as if thrown in derision of his misery. In truth, the gaiety and the masks gave to this night a certain resemblance to the last he had spent in Genoa : it seemed its mocking and gigantic phantom.

Obstructed by so many obstacles, Cesario was some hours ere he could reach

the Palazzo Doria; and when he got there, the morning was just dawned.

Those magnificent gardens, always open to the public, were filled with multitudes: where the fountains spouted wine, or the groves were transiently illuminated by a burst of fire-works, there poured the tide of idlers; so that Cesario found some unobstructed paths to reach the house.

In one of these, (a mossy alley, actually roofed with evergreens,) he encountered the very man he sought. Doria had withdrawn from the giddy crowd, to refresh himself with the dewy breathings of morn: his surprise at sight of Cesario was only equalled by the other's joy.

Their first few questions mutually answered, Doria prepared to relieve the anxiety of his young friend. Having led him into a little Gothic oratory, buried among the trees, therefore not likely to

attract intruders, he began his important communication.

The prince related what he had to tell, without preface or remark ; leaving characters to develop themselves by their actions.

“ Some days after you left Genoa,” he said, “ I received a visit from the Signor Giovanni : he put into my hand two papers : one his last testament in case of his death ; and the other, a legal disposition of his property during his life. It was his purpose, he said, to re-enter the Order of St. John.”

Cesario started, and changed countenance : his lips moved ; but the prince hearing no articulate sound, proceeded.

“ You shall see that last paper, before we part — for it is generously full of care for all *you* could wish attended to on the lands that once were your father’s — at present I’ll go on with my story.

“ He told me in brief, that a cruel

misunderstanding had disunited you, (of what nature he said not,) and he expressed the liveliest anxiety to discover whither you were gone. He then obtained my promise to transmit him whatever account might reach me respecting you, wherever he might then be, and took his leave.

“ I was far from guessing what *was* the cause of your alienation ; and it was not till several days afterwards, that I was let into the lamentable secret.

“ I was sent for one morning by the Marchesa Brignoletti, who was in the habit of consulting me occasionally. She appeared in extreme distress of mind, while she told me, that her daughter was then given up to such a pitiable state, in consequence of an attachment to Signor Cigala, (whose departure from Genoa, and purpose of renewing his vow of celibacy, were publicly talked of,) that she had lost all government of herself ; and

was, in truth, little short of downright distraction."

At this sentence, Cesario grasped the prince's arm with a convulsive pressure, and smothered a groan: still, however, he spoke not. — Doria continued.

"The material part of this infatuated girl's confession was, that Signor Cigala had uniformly shunned her; but as she persisted in attributing such conduct to a high sense of honour towards you, she besought her mother to urge him for his own sake, as well as hers, to relax his rigid principles, and to take the hand she never would yield to another.

"In short, my dear Adimari, I would not say it to *you* if I could avoid it, but truth is sacred; and I confess the commission I was prayed to undertake was absolutely to ask Signor Cigala to marry the Signora Beatrice."

"Hold! hold, Prince!" exclaimed Cesario, starting up distractedly, "I cannot—will not believe——" He checked

the rash conclusion, bowed his crimson face on his hand, and re-seated himself in silence. Never had respect made a greater conquest!

The excellent Doria felt the full value of this self-command, and acknowledged it.

“ I believe now, it is best to tell you what follows, in brief. Well then: — I undertook their commission — undertook it to satisfy my own astonishment and incredulity; for, in fact, I thought better of your friend than that he would ‘sell his large honours’ for that toy — a susceptible girl: he did not disappoint me: he refused the lady with all her wealth and beauty. He assured me, that in doing so, he made no sacrifice to friendship — for that he never had felt the smallest inclination for her; that he was exceedingly sorry his zeal for her mental improvement, when he considered her your future wife, should ever have led her into so fatal an error. In truth,

he spared her, more than any other man in his circumstances would have done ; for then it was, that I learnt how your friendship had been destroyed."

"If I am awake," exclaimed Cesario, striking his forehead with both hands, and raising his agonised eyes to Heaven, "then am I of all men most wretched!"

"Say not so, Adimari, when you have such a friend."

"Have!" reiterated Cesario, with a thrilling voice—"I have him no longer!"

Doria looked at him in expressive silence. Cesario's ghastly look, joined to the anguish of his voice, told of something more than mere suspicions or reproach: the prince remembered, that when he had spoken of reconciliation between the friends, Giovanni's countenance had changed to pale, and then to red, as he said, in a hurried voice, "No, no; there are things, I fear, I cannot—ought not to forgive."

There was but one thing which, as a

gentleman and a knight, Doria believed it was impossible to efface, even by repentance; and with this thought he divined the humiliating secret.

He heaved a deep sigh, and said, emphatically, "Unhappy young man!"

Cesario sat, pressing his clasped hands on his burning temples, without attending to him: shame, misery, despair were all in his altered countenance. Now and then he groaned; and a convulsive shudder ran through his limbs. At times he snatched away his head, and pressed his hands closer over his eyes; as if by that action he could shut out the image in his mind—Giovanni's last look!—but still it was there, still did it enter into his soul: a start, a cry told the momentary pang.

The next instant fixed him in mute and motionless despair.

At length his tortured soul relieved itself by words: he spoke, at intervals, in a voice interrupted by grief.

“Now do I understand thee, Giovanni. Fool that I was—blind, infatuated fool!—when I thought him harsh to venial faults, he was but just: he knew her false, false heart. False! mighty heaven, can she have been so false, so lost, so humbled!——and I have loved this woman!”

Once more he sunk into stupor.

An instant after, his features brightened with a wild light, and he exclaimed,—“But that bracelet! I saw it in his chamber; ’twas *her* bracelet. Their meeting, too!—No, no; you cheat me; they are both, both false.”

Doria hastened to explain these circumstances: for Giovanni had explained them to him when he commissioned him to return Beatrice the ornament which had caused so much mischief.

His meeting with her (so Giovanni assured the prince) was accidental on his part; and that she had not purposed more than to sound his secret inclina-

tions under the disguise she assumed, he was right in believing.

In truth, Beatrice had flattered herself with the expectation of drawing a delightful discovery from him ; believing that if she failed, pride and anger would enable her to quit him without betraying who she was.

But who that passion hurries thus far, dare say she will go no further ? If we give our hand to a fiend, will he not drag us down a precipice ?

Beatrice voluntarily sacrificed her delicacy ; and the next sacrifice exacted by the tyranny of passion was decency itself.

She was maddened by Giovanni's preference of friendship to love (who quickly guessed the disguised tempter, and modelled his replies accordingly), and, yielding to her torrent feelings, she burst forth in reproaches, confessions, supplications !

Giovanni rebuked this unmaidenly violence, while he assured her that this

fancy for him would pass away like others ; for, that she mistook her own heart when she believed it so eternally devoted to him.

It was in answer to this ungrateful truth, that, having repeated to him all she did at the prompting of this passion, and contrasted it with her feeble return to the fondness of Cesario, that she ended with the words which caught Cesario's ear.

To this explanation Doria only added, that, by his advice, the Marchesa had taken her daughter to travel ; as it was probable change of scene would abate the poignancy of the latter's disappointment, and the former's sense of family-degradation.

“ Rouse yourself, Adimari ! ” cried the blunt but kindly Doria, when he concluded ; “ make up your mind to forget all this : leave the foolish girl to her shame, and begin life afresh. Take my word for it, there is both honour and

happiness in store for you yet, if you will but seek them."

"Yes, Prince!" replied Cesario, with a mixture of pride and anguish, "I *will* forget this cruel, this once-dear Beatrice!" A sigh burst out with her name, his lips quivered, and tears suddenly covered his eyes.

Ashamed of the weakness, yet unable to clear his suffocated voice, he stopped, turning his eyes downwards. This effort of self-conquest was beyond his present strength; the tears rolled over his cheeks, and his heart, once escaping the curb, could no longer be commanded. He started from the prince into another division of the oratory, and remained there till he could re-appear with firmness.

When he returned, it was with a composed exterior; and, pressing the prince's hand most gratefully more than once, he said, in a resolute tone,

"Your Highness shall have no cause

to blush for me in future. I will rather tear out my heart than let it regret her — she that never loved me ! I could have pardoned any thing but such a confession. Glory will soon efface *her* image ; but what shall recompense me for the loss of my friend ! What can root out my black ingratitude to him ! To doubt him had been crime enough — but to outrage him too !”

The memory of that last act came over Cesário's soul, aggravated by all his present convictions. It sunk him into an abyss of shame, from which he thought nothing could recover him ; so that every other image faded before it ; and even she was, indeed, forgotten, whose faithless conduct had caused his guilt.

Doria strove to argue him into happier feelings ; but, as he could not deny that Giovanni, through all his tenderness for his former friend, showed a deep and

powerful sense of injury, his reasonings were of little avail.

Cesario listened to the various details of that friend's generous conduct towards the old tenants and attendants at the Marino in gloomy silence: for to him these seemed but so many parts of a great and signal revenge.

Doria could not resist telling him Giovanni's share in the transaction with Signor Michaeli; it had come naturally to light, during the period of enquiring for Cesario, and transmitting the money.

The Syndic had that sum now in trust for his absent relative.

"O, do not quite crush me!" interrupted Cesario, in a paroxysm of remorse and self-abasement — "no more — no more!" He covered his face again, and was silent.

So various, and so powerful were the feelings by which he was agitated, that his countenance changed every minute: by degrees, its acute expressions of agony

were less frequent, till at length there remained only a look of melancholy determination.

“ I will not ask it !” he said, thinking aloud ; “ I am beyond pardon. My only atonement must be a life spent like his — so shall I prove, that I was not all unworthy of the love he once bore me.”

When Doria questioned him on his intentions, he avowed his resolution of following the path of his offended friend through the fields of war ; but that, at too awful a distance for Giovanni to know it, till his career, perhaps, were honourably closed.

Doria did not dissuade him from this purpose ; it was his wish to see Cesario advancing in the line of duty ; and his well-grounded hope, that the chances of war might reconcile the friends in the most affecting and rivetting way — by mutual defence ! Yet, if he could accelerate so desirable a re-union, it was almost his duty to do so.

He spoke, therefore, of Giovanni's general kindness, as well as his particular friendship; he urged the value of Cesario's penitence, and the probable effects of time in softening even the fiercest resentments; and he besought him, not to carry his commendable self-abhorrence to a length which might in reality rather afflict than appease his friend.

The prince offered to mediate between their estranged hearts; but Cesario would not hear of it. He was too self-degraded, in his own eyes, to think that any thing would procure Giovanni's forgiveness, except a series of hazardous actions and long repentance.

Doria talked something about foolish romance, overstrained delicacy, &c. but his heart was of Cesario's opinion; and he urged the thing no further.

"I know not what we shall do in the business of Malta," said the prince, after a while, with an air of secret vexation; "but if we do nothing, you may fairly

fill up your idle time by a gallant action or two ; and, after all, if we act as we ought, and carry our fleet to the defence of Malta, you can join us from the shore. Go, then, in heaven's name. I now wish never to hear of you, but where danger is grappled with, and honour won."

Cesario took the kindly-extended hand of the veteran, and pressed it against his breast.

"Farewell, my Prince !" he said, with a softened heart, " we may never meet again. I should go a less unhappy man, if I knew that my father's friend was relieved from any part of those cares, which so lately ——" Cesario stopped, respectfully loath to press a tender point, yet gratefully anxious to know something of Doria's most intimate feelings.

The prince gave him a look of pleased acknowledgment. " Go content, then, my dear Adimari. My family-affairs brighten : I have good hope that matters

will turn out better than I expected — for there is no marriage. I shall not forget this proof of your regard for me and mine.” He pressed his young friend’s hand very earnestly, and Cesario kissing his in return, bowed and departed.

He hastened at once to his relation’s in the Piazza dell’ Acqua Verde, as it was necessary for him to ascertain the amount of what Giovanni’s exertions had recovered; and to make arrangements for the career upon which he was about to enter.

The Syndic received him with cordial pleasure; gave him the details of Signor Michaeli’s handsome conduct, and delivered up the proper vouchers from the bank in which he had lodged the money.

Cesario’s first employment of this money was for the purposes of gratitude and kindness, (and, how sweet was the pleasure so long untasted by him!) He next redeemed the only remnant of

property his father had left ; and retaining sufficient for the possible contingencies of another country, and an independent service, prepared to set forth on his pilgrimage of penitence.

There had been a time when, circumstanced as now, Cesario would have perished rather than have used the good fortune for which he was indebted to the friend he had since insulted ; but those times, happily, were gone ; and, awakened to clearer views of the truly noble, he was now able to vanquish himself, and prove his repentance by sacrificing his pride.

To allow Giovanni the privilege of remotely becoming his benefactor, was in fact to let him “ heap coals of fire upon the offender :” in doing so, Cesario was humbling himself before him more completely than if he were cast upon his knees entreating pardon.

But humility is the only certain sign of repentance ; and Cesario did so sin-

cerely abhor himself for what he had done, that he justly believed it would be far easier for him to obtain Giovanni's forgiveness, even now, than that of his own accusing conscience.

But when we resolve on right, and are conscious that we see our own actions without prejudice or passion ; when we feel that our warmest aspirations are for the purification of our own character, and the esteem of the excellent ; — then, whatever be our faults, we feel in ourselves the assurance of peace hereafter. Those noble aspirations are a pledge to us of future self-respect ; they tell us that we shall one day regain it : and, with self-respect, where is the calamity which is insupportable ?

In all that related to Giovanni, Cesario's heart was soothed and calmed, solely by principles which did him honour : but the oblivion which quickly passed over the image of Beatrice, was produced by less exalted agency. He

was mortified, irritated, stung with the idea of being duped either by his own credulous vanity, or by her art ; and his pride, thus forcibly roused, promised soon to make absolute aversion, succeed to love. Nay, there were moments when he remembered what he never otherwise would have allowed himself to remember, that the symptoms of preference had begun on the side of Beatrice. Had she continued true, this recollection might only have heightened his grateful tenderness — but acting faithlessly, it rendered her lightness but the more despicable.

Whatever were the causes, the effect was salutary ; and, all given to the two grand objects of his soul, glory and his friend, Cesario now turned his back on the scene of former deceitful joys, without one wish for their return.

CHAPTER IX.

AND Giovanni ! where was he ? — what had been, what were now his feelings ?

When he quitted his own house so abruptly on the night of Giulio Carega's marriage, he hurried, unconscious whither ; and that, in a perturbation of soul, more congenial with the stormy character of him who caused it, than with his own habitual self-command.

Having by chance taken the way to the ramparts, he walked along them, regardless of the wind and rain now suddenly beating in upon him from the south.

Not a creature was stirring on these noble terraces, except the solitary sentinels of the distant forts, whose far-off

steps were, however, lost in the roar of sea and air.

Upon the dark mass presented by the city below, but a speck of light was here and there seen glimmering like glow-worms, and like them vanishing into the surrounding blackness. Only the waving lanterns of the shipping in the harbour, and the beacon of the Pharos, steadily illuminated their immediate stations ; all else was dark : the ocean presented one black, immeasurable abyss ; the land, a shapeless chaos of gloom.

Giovanni felt not the blasts, as they rushed furiously over his head, to rouse and scatter those inland woods which were yet silent : he felt but the blow of Cesario.

“ Dishonoured! — disgraced! — undone!”—he ejaculated repeatedly, as he walked to and fro ; sometimes stopping and gazing round, unconscious what he looked on, or listened to ; unconscious that he was alone, unmantled, and un-

bonnetted, in the middle of a boisterous night on an exposed rampart.

“And by thee, Cesario!—thee, for whom I would have died!”—Giovanni’s great heart gave way under nothing but disgrace.

In that age of chivalric character, to receive a blow was to endure the greatest indignity man might suffer; and not to avenge it, was to live dishonoured: but to wash out disgrace in the blood of him for whom Giovanni would willingly have shed all *his* blood, drop for drop, how could it be thought on?—yet, they must meet no more, if they met not at the point of each other’s swords.

“We are divorced, then, for ever!” exclaimed Giovanni, still breathing his agitated soul to the deafening elements; “and now there is no interest for me in life.”

At that moment ten thousand delightful recollections of former days came over him, dimming the loftier images of

future devotion to religion and glory. Sympathies of taste, feeling, principle; intellectual pleasures shared with Cesario, and heightened by participation; sorrows softened, virtues confirmed, or frailties subdued in generous emulation of each other's better qualities; unequal habits assimilated by equality of affection; confidence unbounded.

All these joys of holy friendship, which elevate the soul to a rank little less than angelic, these joys were gone; like a momentary glimpse of Heaven, they had been, and were withdrawn.

Giovanni's heart melted at the review of such a past; and for some time his regrets absorbed the sense of personal degradation.

By slow degrees, however, his ideas arranged themselves; and those plans for the future, which were at first but indistinct images floating through uncertainty, assumed shape and fixedness.

While Cesario remained his friend;

allied to the general world, by the variety of bonds which that friend's warm affections were daily multiplying, Giovanni became interested in them all; and self-devoted to that chosen friend, had their union of souls continued, he never would have shackled the freedom of his own actions, by renewing his vow of obedience to the order of St. John;—but now that he and Cesario were to each other as though they had never been, the world was grown a wilderness, and the service of God and humanity the only sanctuaries for Giovanni.

To the offices of religion, and the duties of charity, he looked for consolation; the sacred fire of the altar was still burning in his breast, as brightly as when it first kindled there; he could still carry to the feet of his heavenly Father, the obedience, the gratitude, the perfect love of a son; he could still glow with kindly admiration of brave and excellent associates; he could still delight in the beau-

ties, and meditate on the wonders of creation ; he could enjoy the luxury of ministering to the sick, the sorrowful, and the poor ; he could look back on a life of twenty-eight years past without reproach from others, and with scarcely one just rebuke from his own heart ; how then could he call himself miserable ?

With such affections remaining, and such objects for those affections to fix on, could his soul be desolate ?—and with such godlike gratifications, could it be joyless ?

Giovanni roused himself, with a noble blush, from his temporary weakness ; and in spite of the worm yet gnawing in that heart where Cesario had once been treasured, he left the ramparts, and descending into the town, entered the first church at which early mass was performing.

There, in secret, he addressed himself to the one great Being, on the subject of his own immediate wants ; he prayed for

tranquillity of spirit and a life of usefulness ; he prayed for blessings upon the man whose unkindness had pierced him ; he prayed for re-union with him in the world of spirits.

This done, he returned home, where he began immediately to settle his worldly affairs, and make that distribution of his property which the laws allowed : he could not alienate anything ; but he had it in his power to grant annuities during his life, and he used that power chiefly in favour of Signor Adimari's old servants and former pensioners.

Part of his large revenue he allotted to the kinsman whom he intrusted with the superintendence of his estates ; the far greater part he devoted to the service of his Order.

After seeing these dispositions put into a legal form, he deposited duplicates of them, and of his final testament, in the hand of Prince Doria ; thus prudently

providing a check upon the possible avidity or neglect of his trusted relation.

It was his purpose to go direct to Malta, in a noble galley which he bought at an enormous price of the Seigniory, and which he meant as a present to the Grand Master.

While this vessel was completing her complement of men and stores, Giovanni had ample leisure to think of Cesario.

Prince Doria's embassy from the Marchesa, found him full of anxiety for that friend, and left him doubly pierced with regret. — Had that embassy taken place but twelve days sooner, he might yet have retained his friend. Cesario would then have been told the truth by one whom he could not hesitate to believe; and now, explanation was vain, and reconciliation hopeless. That fatal blow had destroyed every thing.

When Giovanni found that neither Doria, nor the Syndic, nor any of Cesario's younger associates knew whither he

was gone, nor by what means his wants were supplied, this generous friend began to entertain the most alarming apprehensions. He could not doubt Cesario's almost immediate repentance of the outrage which severed them, even before reflection might have made him question the justice of his suspicions: he could not doubt the distraction of such a mind, when possessed at once by jealousy and remorse; and some fearful ideas of self-destruction crossed his thoughts.

Panic-struck with such an image, Giovanni determined to go in search of him. Concealing his name, but liberally bestowing his purse wherever he went, he rode from village to hamlet, from hamlet to solitary hut, just as he discovered, or fancied he discovered, traces of Cesario's route.

Cesario's was a face and figure which, once seen, could never be forgotten; and even in his various stages of distraction, gloom, and total stupefaction of every

power, mental and bodily, the peasants had remarked him, as he passed along, with occasional feelings of admiration, curiosity, or wonder, which assisted in stamping his remembrance.

That fortunate peculiarity which distinguished Cesario from other men, afforded Giovanni a sure guide; and he trod the labyrinth of all his wretched friend's wanderings, in patient hope of reaching his resting place at last.

Giovanni's intention was not to seek an interview with him; it was now his point of honour to avoid one: but he found it impossible to throw his soul into other duties, until he had ascertained Cesario's existence, and covertly supplied his wants.

In this state of mind, what was his emotion, when he recognised in the person of an insensible man, lying across the path of a mountain-pass, his still-dear Cesario?

To throw himself off his horse, to raise,

to support, to chafe the limbs of that pale corse; to pour a cordial into his lips, and breathe into them his own warm breath, were the actions of a moment. Every thing was forgotten but that morning in which this very Cesario had so supported him, after having snatched him from a watery grave.

Giovanni looked on him in pale and speechless anxiety, while thus endeavouring to restore him to animation; but when he saw his heart heave and his lips move, the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he broke out into audible thanksgivings.

As Cesario opened his eyes, they met those of Giovanni; they remained fixed on him, it is true, yet calmly, vacantly, without change or expression. "O worse than dead!" exclaimed Giovanni, clasping him in agony against his breast, and looking at him as though he hoped that look would rekindle extinguished reason.

"Then I leave thee no more!" he

cried, after a pause, during which Cesario's unsettled intellect betrayed itself in words. "I leave thee no more — unless Heaven restore thee to thyself!"

Giovanni spoke in the calm tone of fixed but despairing resolution: he thought of Beatrice, while contemplating the wreck she had made; and he well-nigh abhorred himself for being innocently connected with her perfidy.

The towers of a convent, seen through a gorge of the mountains, first inspired him with hope: he lifted Césario gently from the ground, where he had sunk again, from mere animal exhaustion; and holding him firmly on with one hand, while he led his horse with the other, he proceeded slowly onwards.

It is needless to add, that Giovanni was the silent brother of La Trappe, who watched unwearied by Cesario's side for four tedious weeks; and that it was on Giovanni's shrouded figure, Cesario di-

rected his first glance of returning consciousness.

Giovanni had long learned to master the impulse of extravagant feelings ; had it not been so, he must have rushed into the arms of Cesario the moment that well-beloved voice, re-informed by reason, had reached his ear : — but, accustomed to vanquish himself, he paused, till the repeated thrills of thankful surprise ceased to quiver through every vein, and then he approached the bed of his friend.

The fervent benediction of his yearning heart was not uttered by his lips ; it could not escape even at his eyes ; for they were so shaded by his cowl, that neither their expression, nor the tears which flooded them at that moment, and which poured down the moment after, were visible to Cesario.

The latter thought he saw only a pious brother of St. Bruno, calmly transferring his charitable cares from the bed of a convalescent to that of some greater

sufferer, when he looked indeed upon the figure of his friend, of that friend within whose heart all the tender passions were wrestling with despotic honour.

The laws of the Knights Hospitallers were framed in the spirit of chivalry; and the members of that order were consequently accustomed never to separate the temporal from the spiritual part of their code. Thus, Giovanni dared not go beyond the bounds he had now reached. As a Christian, he had succoured the man that outraged him, and he had returned good for evil; but as a knight, he must avoid his presence, or redeem his knightly character with his life.

The laws of this order, like those of our own military bodies, were directly adverse to its spirit: thus, with equal inconsistency, those laws denounced the practice of duelling, while every knight who failed to avenge an affront, offered

him willfully or heedlessly, was tacitly outlawed.

Giovanni was not all faultless : he was but the brightest pattern of an imperfect idea of Christian duty : his nobler faculties were yoked, equally with those of the lowest intellect, to the car of spiritual supremacy ; to the authority of ancient usages ; and he followed, unresistingly, where these led. Happy they who live under a clearer light !

Thus he did not see the monstrousness of embodying the peaceful spirit of Christianity in the frame of fantastic honour ; a frame, however engaging to the eye, pernicious to many of the virtues and blessings of life. At the command of that visionary honour, how often were the tenderest ties dissolved ! Judging an act independent of the intention, it resented a breath unwillingly breathed upon it, as direfully as if aimed by deliberate malice.

At such a chimerical command, did

Giovanni now immolate his fondest wish. He acknowledged Cesario dearer to him than ever, because more wretched; he cherished no resentment against him; and he felt himself not the less respectable, for refraining from avenging a blow given in a moment of phrensy.

Yet, because a blow, under any circumstances, was considered a mortal affront by mankind in general, and by the rules of chivalry in particular; he stifled the cry of nature, turned from the languid head he yearned to support, and tore himself away.

Giovanni did not quit the convent, till he was quite assured of Cesario's progress towards recovery: he then departed, with a resigned though joyless spirit; leaving the monks of St. Bruno as incurious as they were taciturn, and commissioned only to speak of him as a traveller.

His business now lay at Rome. Thither he went, to throw himself at the

feet of the pontiff, and ask his permission to resume the sign of the cross.

This act of humility was a mere ceremony, essential only as a part of that complete authority over all professing obedience to the Holy See, which its head found it expedient to display.

From Rome, Giovanni proceeded to Porto Ercole, whither he had directed his galley to meet him. It was not in the port, when he reached Ercole; and anxious to learn something of the Turkish armament, and the views of the Grand Master, he hastened to a neighbouring commandery, where Dueguerras, the bailiff of Negropont, was just arrived from a mission in France.

Giovanni had last seen this brave old knight, when he fought for the last time as a brother of the order, on the shore of Africa. They had bled together on the plains of Gomera, when the almost impregnable fortress of El Penon de Velez was first taken by the knights, and the sol-

diers of Spain — that important fortress, which, in the course of three years after, had been lost and won again by the Christians.

When Giovanni beheld this intrepid old man, at the age of seventy, eagerly embracing toil and peril for the sake of his brethren; hurrying from a peaceful and powerful situation, into the shock of war; he could not enough admire the force of mind, and the omnipotence of virtue.

The order of St. John, dedicated solely to the service of the oppressed, whether states or individuals; exposing themselves continually to every species of danger, not for their own aggrandisement or riches, but for the rescue of private property; that order, which existed only to relieve the poor, attend the sick, and release the captive; was not one, to see perish; it became the duty of every Christian, but especially of every knight, to rally round the standard of

St. John, and present his breast to the pikes of the infidels.

The old Dueguerras uttered his resolution of dying at the foot of that standard, with all the enthusiasm of youth; and Giovanni's already kindled spirit caught new fire from that of so ardent a companion.

It was publicly ascertained, that the Turkish armament, which had excited the alarm of so many different states, was in reality intended for the destruction of the Knights Hospitallers.

In every conquest over the Ottomans and Algerines, these intrepid brothers were always foremost; adventuring their lives fearlessly, which they passed purely.

The Goletta, and Penon de Velez, which were indeed the keys of Barbary, were formerly won by the bravery of the knights; in consequence of which, Hassan of Algiers, and Dragut of Tripoli, became their most inveterate foes.

The Porte, long irritated against the

order, was at last roused to vengeance ; not by motives of sound and general policy, but by the petty resentments of a minister and a mistress.

The capture of a huge gallion, laden with the richest commodities of the East, by a Maltese galley, was the real cause of that mighty armament, which afterwards broke like an inundation over the island rock.

Urged to revenge the insult, thus given to his favourites, (for the gallion, with her lading, belonged to the Kislár Aga, and the chief ladies of the seraglio,) Solyman hastily summoned a military council, and laid before them his reasons for attacking the knights of St. John.

He represented their continual and successful enterprises against various Mahomedan possessions ; their mortifying superiority in the very sea which seemed exclusively the right of Turkey ; the Archipelago, he said, swarmed with

their gallies, and every port in the Morea bore witness to their audacity.

But above all, he dwelt less on the evils resulting to his commerce, and the disgrace inflicted on his arms, than upon the alarming hindrance which these formidable warriors opposed to the piety of his subjects. No true Mussulman could now venture a pilgrimage to Mecca or Medina, without incurring the almost certain penalty of death or slavery : — the knights were always on the watch for the vessels bearing these devout persons ; and their fate was inevitable, when once they encountered the Christian foe.

Solyman, therefore, deemed it a point of conscience to extirpate such a confederacy of disciplined banditti ; or at least to drive them from a rock, whence, like eagles in their aëry, they watched and pounced upon their prey.

It was his proud boast, (and a proud one indeed it was !) that he had already

wrested from their weakened grasp all their possessions in the Archipelago and Asia Minor ; had driven them from Rhodes ; and finally left them but this single fortress in the Mediterranean. — Why then should he doubt almost immediate success in a second attack upon these sea-girt robbers ?

The conquest of Sicily, and the recapture of the Christian forts on the African coast, which some of his generals recommended, he considered but as secondary objects ; alleging, that if Malta were taken, and her knights exterminated, Sicily would lose her bulwark, and the African strongholds must fall of course.

In short, Solyman felt the insult received by the chief officer of his pleasures, as a personal insult to himself ; and, as such, he thirsted to revenge it.

The expedition once determined upon, the Sultan issued orders for immediate preparation. His fleet was confided to

THE KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN.

Piali, an able admiral in the flower of manhood ; and his land forces to Mustapha, a general advanced in age, but celebrated for former victories.

To these forces were to be joined the strength of Barbary. Hassan, the young and dauntless Basha of Algiers, agreed to assist the armament with all his troops, headed by himself in person ; and Dragut, governor of Tripoli, was to lend his skill and experience to the admiral of the Porte.

The fame of this noted corsair had long rivalled that of the great Andrea Doria, during whose latter years Dragut had started into celebrity. His ability in working a vessel was only equalled by the admirable courage and conduct with which he either defended or attacked : he was enured to fatigues and hardships of every kind ; and possessed in himself that precious secret of success, invincible determination.

Under the command of such leaders,

a fleet, consisting of a hundred and sixty ships of war, besides transports, and an army of thirty thousand Janizaries and Spahis, (not including the African auxiliaries,) formed an awful object for expectation.

When once the destination of this armada was ascertained, La Valette, the Grand Master of Malta, prepared to receive them, as became the head of an order which had never yet shrunk from an enemy. He called a general council; and having communicated to them the intelligence just received from his agents at Constantinople, he proceeded, by their consent, to issue a summons for the immediate return of all those knights who were absent from the island; whether on their own concerns, or pursuing their duty at their different priories, bailliwicks, and commanderies.

He dispatched agents to levy troops in Italy, and solicit aid from the princes of Christendom; and he wrote himself

to Don Garcia di Toledo, the Sicilian viceroy, for those ample succours of land and sea forces, which his master Philip of Spain had not only promised, but which policy rendered as necessary for the ultimate preservation of his dominions, as for that of the island.

All now was impulse and activity in Malta : the dispersed knights were hurrying from every part of the continent, to take their posts in that huge citadel ; vessels were daily arriving there with arms, ammunitions, provisions, and foreign volunteers. All things, in short, announced the brave La Valette's resolution of repulsing the infidels, or of gallantly perishing in the attempt.

Expectant Europe looked on in breathless anxiety, while this handful of undaunted chevaliers, in the spirit of a single champion encountering an impious giant, planted themselves to receive the shock of the infidels.

Except its natural advantages, Malta

possessed few means of defence. When the order received it from the hands of the Emperor Charles V., above thirty years before the present period, it boasted but a single fortification, the castle of St. Angelo; and two towns. One of these, called *La Citte Notabile*, was the capital and centre of the island; and the other, named *Il Borgo*, was then a mere collection of fishers' huts, and lay behind the castle of St. Angelo.

L'Isle Adam, the memorable Grand Master of that period, fixed the seat of government at *Il Borgo*, surrounded it with walls, and established the convent of the order there.

Since then, in the time of John D'Omedes, his third successor, two more fortifications had been added, called the forts of St. Elmo and St. Michael.

Each of these forts standing upon what may be termed the pinnacles of the island rock, commanded its approaches by land and sea: for St. Elmo was erected

on the peninsular point which, running out towards Sicily, divides what had else been one vast harbour into two distinct ports.

Marza Muzet, the lesser of these ports, lay on the left of this peninsula, and was supposed to be sufficiently protected by the cannon of St. Elmo; but the Great Port required additional defences, as it embraced all the wealth and power of the order.

From that side of it which fronted the peninsular rock on which St. Elmo stood, there ran out two lesser peninsulas equally steep and defensible. On that nearest the harbour mouth, was the fort of St. Angelo protecting the town behind it; and on that beyond (miscalled the *Isle de la Sangle*) rose the fort of St. Michael.

The space between these two slips of land formed a secure port for the galleys of the order, where they were nightly shut in, by an enormous iron chain, stretching

across from the fort of St. Angelo to the point of the Isle de la Sangle.

On the further side of La Sangle, lay another inner port for merchant-vessels, commanded by the heights of Conradin ; but on these heights there were no fortifications ; and the various roads and anchorages in different quarters of the island, left it but too accessible to a descent of troops, if protected by a numerous fleet,

The confidence of La Valette was however grounded on the opinion that he could maintain his island till the stormy season of autumn ; when the Turks, (supposing the siege not raised sooner,) would no longer be able to keep the seas, or assist the operations of their land forces.

Half suspecting the selfish and short-sighted policy of Spain, (which was indeed to withhold assistance till the last moment, lest Sicily should be attacked while its viceroy was absent,) La Valette

determined to rely solely on his own resources.

In this spirit, he first estimated his military strength, and then apportioned it to the weakness or importance of such positions as he wished to guard.

After numbering his knights present, and expected, he found they did not exceed seven thousand; and of inferior soldiers, including foreign auxiliaries, serving brothers, and peasants hastily trained to arms, there were not above three thousand; but they were all heroes; and in the breast of a single hero, lives the spirit of a host.

The defence of the entrance of the great port, La Valette confided to Romegas, commander of the gallies; St. Elmo he destined for the venerable bailiff of Negropont: the Isle de la Sangle he intrusted to the bravery of Di Monte, an Italian knight of the first class; while he undertook himself the defence of St. Angelo, and the protection of Il Borgo.

The ancient capital he left to the care of an experienced Portuguese called Mosquita; delegating to Copier, grand marshal of the order, a sort of flying warfare; that of watching the movements of the hostile armada, as it proceeded round the coast, and opposing himself with his band of knights to the first descent of troops.

Having appointed each his post, and receiving from the whole assembly of chevaliers, their assurance of dying in their defence, he called on them to follow him to the church of their patron saint; there to ask a blessing on their arms, and to purify themselves from their past sins by unfeigned contrition.

This pious ceremony done, each knight betook himself to his station; and Dueguerras, when he gave this relation to Giovanni, was himself hastening to assume the honourable post assigned to him in the defence of St. Elmo.

CHAPTER X.

GIOVANNI listened to these details, with all its first ardours glowing in his heart. A thousand spirit-stirring recollections rushed on him. His own gallant exploits, and those of his brothers in arms, (now raised to the first dignities of the order, or haply resting in the bed of honour,) rekindled in his memory. He listened, enquired, mused, exulted, and melted by turns, as the discourse of Dueguerras roused and calmed him.

Giovanni had served with the brave La Valette, when that memorable hero commanded the gallies of the order; and he knew therefore of what that great soul was capable.

Even his then inexperienced eye had

seen enough to enable him to foresee in riper age, all those sublime qualities of unquenchable resolution, unshrinking fortitude, ever-springing hope, and complete devotedness to duty, which the circumstances of this celebrated siege afterwards called out before the world.

As Dueguerras related the active and multiplied occupations of their Grand Master, Giovanni, saw La Valette in his mind's eye, alternately visiting the magazines and the infirmary; attending the sick, and assisting workmen; now administering a healing draught, and now tracing a fortification; in short, performing the various offices of military science, and of tender charity, with a countenance at once benignant and commanding.

His admiration warmed into affection, as he contemplated an object so greatly lovely; and stifling the sigh which rose to his lips with the half-breathed name of Cesario, he besought Dueguerras to

give him a passage to Malta, if his own galley did not reach Porto Ercole in time.

This request was granted; but as Dueguerras had to touch at Sicily, to expedite the succours promised by the Viceroy Toledo, Giovanni heard with joy of the arrival of his vessel from Genoa.

Having taken on board some knights and soldiers who solicited a passage, he set sail, in company with his veteran friend. At the straits of Messina they parted, whence the Santa Croce (so his ship was called), coasting the fertile shore of Sicily, and doubling Cape Passaro, stretched across the channel of Malta.

As they approached the road of St. Paul, two sails, bearing the appearance of Turkish vessels, were discovered hovering between the island of Goza, and the two islets near.

It was night; but the moon enlight-

ened the whole expanse of sea and sky ; and the weather was so favourable, that the galley might reap the double advantage of sails and oars.

Giovanni ordered his vessel to be advanced near enough to reconnoitre the force of these strangers.

He found them to be a galley of greater strength than his own, attended by a stout brigantine with fifteen banks of oars.

These belonged, doubtless, to the Ottoman armada, and had probably been sent forward to spy into the state of Goza, and most likely to attempt a surprise ; if so, their capture might prove of essential service, by retarding the movements of the fleet from which they were detached.

Under this impression, Giovanni determined to attack them. " Shall we not advance, my friends ? " he asked with a tone of confidence, as he pointed them out to the officers and men around him.

He was answered by a burst of enthusiasm: he then gave the necessary orders; assigned to each man his quarters; and ere he took his own station, called Rodolphe to his side.

In a few words he explained to the amazed Cahet, the nature of the scene he was about to witness; and having dwelt on its importance to the interest of Goza and Malta, gave him the option either of remaining on deck, or going below.

Rodolphe received only a confused impression of the greatness of the object, for which this struggle was about to commence; but he perfectly comprehended the danger which threatened his benefactor. "Leave you, my dear master! — leave you!" he exclaimed, his eyes sparkling, even while filling with tears, — "no — if I must die, it shall be here," and he threw himself at his master's feet.

Giovanni raised him, renewed his de-

scription of the horrid scene he expected, and after an ineffectual attempt at persuading him to avoid it, assigned him a post near himself.

Meanwhile the Turkish vessels having espied the Christian galley, believing her an easy prize, had tacked about, and were now making towards her.

The moon that silvered the waves through which they were advancing, shone full upon them, displaying their formidable appearance.

There was something in the gallant bearing of these vessels, as they glided along the bright moon-track, which commanded admiration ; and hearts less intrepid than those in the Santa Croce, might have quailed when they came near enough to mark their strength distinctly : so greatly disproportionate was it to that which they were about to oppose to it.

The chief strength of a ship, at that period, consisted in small-arms and cross bows : few vessels could boast more than

one great gun, called the *Coursier* ; the fire of which was rendered more or less destructive, rather by the adroitness of him who worked the ship, than by that of the cannoneer particularly attached to it.

Giovanni saw that not only the galley, but the brigantine carried a gun of this sort ; and were, besides, filled with janizaries as well as sailors.

The light of the moon gave to view a band of archers standing on the poop of each, apparently ready to send a deadly shower into the Christian galley.

The officers were numerous, and easily distinguished by their embroidered turbans and glittering scymetars.

As they bore down, the *Santa Croce* rested on her oars, and silently awaited them : the enemy assuming to themselves the honour of seeking, and commencing the engagement. Deceived by this position into an idea that their opponent

was panic-struck and about to surrender, the Turks set up a shout of triumph, accompanied by a crash of warlike instruments.

The Cahet's was the only countenance which changed at the sound ; and his limbs shook : the next moment a shower of arrows and shot fell over him, succeeded by the groans of wounded, and the fall of dying men. His first action was to bury his head in his hands ; but his next was to look for his master.

At that instant Giovanni was trying to extricate himself from an arrow which had unfortunately struck him in the neck, just below the helmet ; Rodolphe flew towards him, wrenched it out, and flung it into the sea : but when he saw the blood spout from the wound like an unstopped spring, he set up a cry of anguish.

Giovanni turned on him a momentary glance of gratitude, said a few cheering

words, and hastily stanching the wound with his scarf, eagerly gave the signal expected by his men.

At that signal, the action on the part of the Christians commenced with a destructive fire of musketry : taking advantage of the smoke, Giovanni's galley was placed in such a situation, that as the clouds dispersed, the whole decks of the enemy were exposed to the archers, who now, in their turn, poured terror and destruction amongst their astonished crew.

The slaughter was great, and the consternation yet greater : the Turk had expected an easy conquest, and this bold resistance struck him at once with surprise and dismay. Instead of the thundering sounds of returning musquetry, or the whizzing of arrows, nought was heard but shrieks, imprecations, groans, and the ineffectual commands of undisciplined authority.

The brigantine, alarmed at the situation of her companion, hastened to her

assistance, and endeavoured to distract and draw off the attention of the Christians: in this, by dextrous management, she succeeded; for Giovanni, seriously annoyed by her manœuvres, was obliged to quit his scarce recovered and now nearly conquered foe: but she brought his vengeance in dreadful reckoning on herself; for quickly closing with her, his great gun was brought to bear; fate winged its ball; and the reeling, and almost instantaneous sinking of the vessel, proved but too truly that that fate was overwhelming death and horror to all on board.

A pause ensued: Turks and Christians as the waves closed over the spot which the brigantine had but just occupied, fixed their eyes there in awful astonishment and fear: the suspense was momentary; other feelings than those of pity and commiseration agitated their bosoms; revenge, and invigorated hope on either side, raised again the blade of

death, and Christian and Turk sought each other, and rushed again into war's hottest ranks with increased hatred and determination.

All but Rodolphe ; he remained, standing with a ghastly fixture of every feature, incapable of moving his eyes from the place where the brigantine had disappeared.

Though the Turks, after the fate of their companions, had sought, and eagerly renewed the fight, their enthusiasm was brief ; 'twas but a momentary paroxysm of the soul, ill calculated to withstand the steady and determined valour of their opponents, now cheered by hope ; and it soon left them to all the horrors of despair : safety was sought in flight, and every energy exerted to escape from their Christian adversary.

The Santa Croce followed in chase ; and Giovanni cheered and encouraged, both with his voice and his example, his brave and resolute adherents.

The Santa Croce was the quicker vessel, and the Turk was soon overtaken. Giovanni, to prevent a repetition of the attempt to escape, laid her along side, and boarded her.

When Rodolphe beheld his master spring on the deck of the Turkish galley, he snatched up a battle-axe and sprang after him : the knights had already joined their dauntless leader ; and the gallies being now fastened together, all the Christians threw themselves in a body upon the enemy.

In the deadly strife which followed, Rodolphe seemed inspired with a new soul ; the instinct of self-preservation was roused in him, and to that was added the new feeling of emulation, and the more powerful desire of succouring or dying for his master. Turks and Christians mingled together in one flood of carnage ; the galley rocked as it were under their struggles ; while the waves, crimsoned with the streams of blood that flowed

into them, polluted the pure reflection of the silvered and serene heavens.

Giovanni now hoped the contest was nearly over; but the Turks in a last paroxysm of despair, rallying round their crescent, presented so formidable an appearance, that the Christians paused astounded, and for an instant shrunk back: the moment was critical; Giovanni saw his men recede; he sprang to their head, and waving his hand, exclaimed, "On, my friends, for the Cross and St. John!"

At that instant his companions saw him fall: consternation seized them; and the Turks, taking advantage of their confusion, pressed them in heaps back to their vessel. Too much weakened, however, to follow up their blow, the enemy thought only of escape; and extricating himself from the cramp-irons which fastened him to the Santa Croce, betook himself a second time to flight.

But Rodolphe, though himself bleeding at every pore, had happily borne off

what he believed his master's lifeless body. He now tore away Giovanni's helmet, and discovered the wound whence the blood had flowed so profusely as to occasion sudden fainting.

It was that arrow-wound which Giovanni had received in the first of the action: though it lay amongst a number of lesser arteries, it might not have produced any extraordinary consequences, had not his unusual exertions not merely loosened the scarf which bound it, but increased the action of the veins themselves.

The wound was, however, speedily stanch'd, and declared of no importance. The shout of his own men, and the yell of the Turks, at their escape, roused him from his temporary suspension of sense: he looked round, saw the flying galley, started up, and snatching a weapon from one next him, called on his rowers to pursue.

A short chase brought them up again

with their enemy, whom now, for the third and last time, they prepared to attack.

No sooner were they along side of her, than giving the desperate example himself, Giovanni leaped into her, followed by his only surviving knight, and the most gallant of his crew.

Rodolphe, now familiarised with danger, and regardless of his streaming wounds, rushed fearlessly after them.

The Turks rallied themselves about the masts, and before the colours, where they fought with a determination worthy the better cause: again and again the Christians attacked them, and as often were they repulsed with dreadful slaughter.

As he trod over an absolute rampart of dead and dying, and cut his way towards the waving crescent, there was a horrid beauty in the figure of Giovanni, which appalled the infidels. His uncovered and golden hair glittered in the moon-beam, while the same pale light

illuminating his face, gave every perfect feature the whiteness and the polish of marble.

His stature, his sublime air, the expression of his countenance, but above all his resistless valour, made him appear more than man; and for a while, the Mussulmen imagined they saw the Patron Saint of the order, combatting for his followers in this shape of earthly beauty.

But quickly shaking off their superstitious panic, they resumed the contest with fresh fury.

The Turkish commander fell in this last struggle: as he dropped, Giovanni snatched the hatchet from Rodolphe, and throwing himself upon the colours, cut them from their staff. They fell into the sea.

As if that were the acknowledged signal for submission, the Turkish officers threw away their swords, and surrendered.

The prisoners were immediately

transported to the Christian galley, and the prize manned; after which, Giovanni gave orders for the deck to be cleared, and the wounded taken care of.

It was then that Rodolphe felt he had regained his master; when he saw him with a countenance full of compassion and sadness, assisting in the decent disposition of the dead, and the care of the maimed and dying.

It was indeed a piteous sight to see the decks both of the galley and her prize, covered with dismembered bodies, some quite motionless, and others yet heaving.

As these were successively plunged into the deep, and the waters of that deep poured over the horrors of the deck, Rodolphe shuddered to his soul, and almost wished himself once more in his solitary hut, by the dreary but unpolluted stream of Aveiron.

The immediate stillness which succeeded to the noise and fury of the fight;

the tranquil course of the planets above, and the waves below; the dark silence of the surrounding islands,—deepened his impression of the past scene: and, already over-excited by the enthusiasm which his master's example and danger had inspired, exhausted by the rapidity and novelty of his sensations, and released from all obligation to further exertion, he sank down in an obscure corner, and wept like a child.

Meanwhile Giovanni, in the true spirit of chivalry, conducted the Turkish officers to his cabin, where he strove to soften their mortification, by admiring the gallantry of their defence, and lamenting his own severe loss.

The highest compliment a victor could pay the vanquished, was to confess that their bravery had caused him to buy victory at a dear rate. Giovanni did this; and thus soothed the pain of defeat, and the regrets of private friendship.

As it was no longer necessary to dis-

guise the object they were seeking, when the Santa Croce fell in with them, the Turkish officers acknowledged that they were proceeding to Goza, for the purpose of surprising its castle; a purpose which, their papers discovered, was to be assisted by treachery.

Some Mahometan slaves employed in the works, and too generously trusted, had engaged to secure their secret entrance into the fortress. The plan appeared so well laid, that it must have been successful, had not Giovanni's galley providentially fallen in with that of the enemy.

Had Goza been delivered into the hands of the Porte, it would have become a station of alarming annoyance to the besieged Maltese; for its castle, built on a rock equally elevated with those of St. Angelo and St. Elmo, commanded the island of Malta; and was separated from it only by a channel of a few miles breadth.

This circumstance at once reconciled Giovanni to the defaced appearance of his galley, and to the grievous slaughter of his men.

They were, perhaps, the first victims that had been offered; but they had attained a worthy object, and fallen gloriously. Though he carried but the remains of that noble vessel, which he fondly expected to present in all its completeness, he brought with it a trophy well worth the staining of its first freshness; and if more than two-thirds of his brave companions had fallen, they had redeemed, with their lives, the lives and liberties of all at Goza.

Satisfied, yet sad, after this retrospect, (for Giovanni never failed to search his actions and his motives) he assembled his remaining crew, and, kneeling in the midst of them, listened to a mass said for the souls of their enemies, as well as for those of their own companions.

The service was short, but impressive;

and Rodolphe joined it, in awful admiration of that benevolent spirit which distinguished every action of his master, and made him the diffuser of "peace and goodwill to all men," even in the centre of merciless war.

Mass ended, the Santa Croce steered for Goza, where Giovanni landed; and having seen the governor, and confided to him the papers found in the Turkish vessel, relating to the treachery of the citadel, their captor re-embarked, and proceeded on his course to Malta.

The Santa Croce entered the great port; and her triumphant gun, firing every minute, announced a prize. The first rays of morning were reddening the grand standard of the order on the tower of St. Angelo, below which, stood a groupe of knights hastily gathered to the spot.

As the galley passed by the castle rock, the knights hailed her, enquiring her country and commander. At the

name of Giovanni Cigala, the noblest in the groupe uttered an exclamation of joy, and hurried down the steep steps of the fortress to give him welcome.

Giovanni threw himself into a shallop, his soul all in a tumult of grateful and solemn feelings; after which, springing on shore, he found himself in the midst of friends, and pressed to the heart of the venerable La Valette.

CHAPTER XI.

THE memorable May of 1565 had already commenced when the transport which bore Cesario came in sight of Malta.

It was broad day, and the reflection of the meridian sun upon the rock made it burn like the approach to a furnace.

That beautiful drapery, formed by the cotton and capillaire plants, by the starry flowers of the caper-bushes, and by that variety of asphodels which clothe Malta in the winter, was now withered, leaving the flinty island in complete nakedness.

That immense rock, hewn by nature into ravines, ramparts, and pinnacles, presented a new and striking object to Cesario. From the spot where he landed, he saw bastions and batteries ascending

from height to height, intersected by dry ditches of wonderful depth and breadth ; rampart rising over rampart ; and above all, the castles of St. Angelo, St. Michael, and St. Elmo.

The town, built upon lower ranges of crags, followed all the inequalities of its extraordinary foundation, and might be called a town of steps ; for the short steep streets were in some places but paved precipices, with almost perpendicular flights of steps cut in the rock, and forming their foot-paths.

In contemplating these strange roads, the mind felt wearied for the body, and shrunk from such a laborious residence : yet still admiration accompanied this feeling ; and a proud sense of man's power and man's perseverance, soon banished whatever alloyed admiration.

Malta was indeed a conquest over nature. At this moment, with the ocean at her foot, her long lines of batteries, her planted artillery, her flags flying

from all those flinty pinnacles which rose like so many towers, she might well have passed for some giant fortress of fabulous days.

The greatness of the object was not lost upon Cesario, who stood for some time eyeing it in a trance of admiration. At the voices of his companions he turned, and beheld, some few paces off, a groupe of knights.

The air of one of these warriors resembled Giovanni; yet the figure seemed neither so tall nor so massy in its proportions: but distances are deceptive, and the dimensions of this figure might be really larger than they appeared.

As the noble soldier varied his position, Cesario thought he could not mistake the graceful sway of that finely-formed body. He hesitated a moment; then breaking from his party, pulled his cloke round him, and drawing the thick feather of his hat over his bent face, prepared with

a throbbing heart to pass this interesting groupe.

The chevaliers divided as he came near them, and the one he observed, remained standing alone. He had evidently been musing on some dear and agreeable idea, for when he raised his head and directed his eyes towards Cesario, his unknown countenance was suffused with all that loveliness of expression which belongs but to one set of feelings.

That engaging expression made Cesario pause; and the courteous stranger, believing from his looks that he wanted information of the way to Il Borgo, immediately advanced.

Saluting Cesario as one brought to the island by the same honourable motive which led thither so many volunteers, he informed him that the Grand Master with the chief of the Order were then engaged in the ceremonies of admitting a brother; but he obligingly offered either to accompany him to the place of

ceremony, or to conduct him to the inn (so the several residences of the convent were called) which was set apart for the reception of strangers. He announced himself as Felix di Toledo, son to the viceroy of Sicily.

Already prepossessed by his fancied resemblance to Giovanni, and by his own interesting countenance, Cesario yielded to the charm of so amiable a manner, and accepted the stranger's offer of accompanying him to the church.

As they walked along, Toledo conversed with great animation upon the state of the island, the reinforcements which they expected, and their daily expectation of the Turkish armament.

Cesario, meanwhile, observed in him no other actual resemblance to Giovanni than what might be found in his voice: that, was deep and clear, and sweet, like his friend's; and like his, Toledo's gave a peculiarly-penetrating intonation to every word expressive of tenderness.

The young knight was nearly Giovanni's age: but his figure was cast in a mould of slighter proportions; and though equally perfect, might be termed rather elegant than magnificent. His eyes, too, were of a much darker blue than Giovanni's; and his war-burnt brow better suited than the saintly clearness of the latter's complexion, with features whose chief beauties consisted in manliness and heart-speaking expression.

Solely intent upon the one great object which he imagined engrossed all who came to share in the danger of Malta, Toledo developed his own interest in it without caution or distrust; though as yet Cesario had announced himself but as an Italian volunteer, with credentials from Prince Doria.

"You belong to the Order, of course?" asked Cesario.

"No,—I am here as a hostage for my father's good-behaviour," replied Toledo, with amiable cheerfulness. "Two

months ago, I came hither with him, in his way from inspecting the Goletta. He left me with the Grand Master, as a pledge which he is to redeem with a gallant fleet and army, the moment the infidels have slipped their cables. I confess I am avaricious enough of glory, to wish contrary winds may keep him in port 'till we have won the day ourselves. Oh the exultation of driving back the whole force of Turkey and Algiers!—Seven thousand knights against as many tens of thousands of infidels!—it would be the triumph of David over Goliath; and I hope to live to share it, or die nobly before Malta falls.”

“ You are a happy man, Don Felix,” observed Cesario, resting his eyes on the speaking countenance of his companion; “ for you do not seem to have any one that makes life too precious to you.”

“ Think you so?” — interrupted Toledo, his eyes suffusing with instantaneous tenderness, and his voice sweetening

beyond all that music has of sweet and touching. "There is one in Sicily whose presence is my paradise. I left a young and beautiful bride for this war-scene. — Why do I call her beautiful? — Dear — dear — that is the word which speaks a husband's feelings. I left her at the call of gratitude: for I was shipwrecked off this island five years ago, and restored to life by the personal exertions of La Valette himself. Should I not have been unworthy my Camilla's love, had I hesitated to offer him the aid of this well-tried sword? — But the sacrifice! — ah! Signor, — you must love as I do; and the creature you doat on, must be your own; sacred marriage must have opened to you all her soul, and shown you there nothing but yourself — and heaven — before you can comprehend half that sacrifice." Cesario looked with something like envy upon Toledo, as the latter stood with his head declined and his arms folded, evidently banqueting

upon the tender ideas he had conjured up. "Sacred marriage, indeed!" he exclaimed, profoundly sighing; "sacred indeed, when even such happiness as you describe, only exalts a husband's sensibility to all that ennobles our nature."

After this remark, both young men proceeded for some time in silence: the one, ruminating upon scenes of domestic bliss; the other, sadly imagining that such were never to exist for him.

Toledo suddenly roused himself, by observing that they must quicken their pace, or lose the ceremony. Cesario, upon whose lips the name of Giovanni had more than once trembled, then enquired what the new knight was called?

"Giovanni Cigala," replied Toledo, "that Cigala, who was once a brother of the Order—the bravest and the best."

Cesario suffocated the exclamation that was bursting from his heart, and turned aside to conceal his face. Toledo went on with his discourse; giving so ani-

minated a description of the action between the Santa Croce and the Turkish vessels, that Cesario's soul flamed out. "My friend! my friend! my peerless Giovanni!" he exclaimed, his countenance radiant with exulting affection.

"He is your friend!" repeated Don Felix, casting on him a brightened look, as if Giovanni's excellence were the pledge for all who claimed his intimacy. Cesario's eyes clouded; he passed his hand over them, while he answered,— "I dare not call him so: we were *once* friends; but I have so sinned against that matchless worth, that nothing less than my life, I think, may expiate it. I come here, Don Felix, to lose that life, I hope, but so to lose it that Giovanni need not blush to shed a tear over my remains. My only business now in this world is to regain his esteem."

"And what was your offence?" asked Toledo, stopping, and looking on him with a searching, yet not prejudging eye.

There was a manly frankness in this direct question, which, if it wanted the extreme delicacy of Giovanni's nicer sensibility, displayed, what was equally valuable, a character "open as day" in him who asked it.

Cesario's nature responded to this sincerity; and, after a momentary pause, he said — "Ere this siege ends, I trust we shall know each other better, Don Felix; but, till then, I cannot bring myself to enter on the long and intricate story. If you are content to take me upon trust, so long, here is my hand: if not, be assured I will build no claim to your acquaintance upon this act of courtesy."

Toledo fell back a few paces, and still keeping his eye fixed upon that of his companion, stood musing for a second or two. There was a playful smilingness over his whole countenance, when, advancing again, he stretched out his hand, and said kindly, — "I'll take you on trust."

Cesario pressed the generous hand

thus offered to him with contradictory feelings : for he felt powerfully attracted to this open-hearted stranger, and he chid himself for admitting any other friendship than the one he had alienated, into his desolated bosom.

After an instant's glance, Toledo removed his kindly eyes, and spoke of something else : his careless air concealed a habit of observing other men's feelings; and at this moment he was benevolently anxious to change the sad thoughts of his companion for images of a more agreeable kind.

It was his creed, that no tender heart could be a depraved one; and seeing such evident signs of sensibility in Cesario, he augured satisfaction rather than disappointment from their future intimacy.

By this time they had reached the entrance of the church. As Toledo put his foot on the threshold, Cesario stopped, in a disorder which amazed even himself.

What was this sudden oppression of his heart, this intolerable pain which shot through him? What was it he regretted for Giovanni, as he thought of that dear friend, on the point of abjuring for ever the complete freedom of his own will? The vow of celibacy was already made in Giovanni's heart; for love was not necessary to his happiness: and the vow of devoting himself to the interests of humanity, led but to the natural course of his own godlike inclinations.

By uniting arms with these gentler modes of serving mankind, the order of St. John gave scope to Giovanni's enterprise and military genius, and by this means, afforded occupation to every power of his mind. Had any one of those powers been condemned to inaction, then Cesario might have shrunk from witnessing his friend's self-devotion.

Cesario said all this to himself without effect; for at every close he added,

“ Still I feel that but for my offence he would not so have forsworn the world.”

Toledo now asked if he would rather not enter. Cesario recollected himself at the question, and whispering an agitated request to be placed as much as possible out of sight, followed into the cathedral.

Till long after he was seated, his troubled senses took no cognisance of any thing. The awful gloom of the church, filled with knights in the black dress of their order ; the numerous trophies of former victories waving before the richly-stained windows ; the pealing anthem, and the smoking incense, were all lost upon Cesario. Even when his faculties began to clear, he had not courage to turn his eyes towards the altar, where he knew he should see his friend.

The preparatory part of the ceremony was already over — that which belongs to the previous devotions of the candi-

date. When the choral music which followed it, was concluded, and the low solemn voice of the Grand Master was heard, proclaiming to those around, the wish of a former brother to renew his vows, Cesario's eyes turned involuntarily that way.

He then saw the august La Valette seated within the enclosure of the sanctuary, and the bishop of Malta standing by his side.

Kneeling upon the lowest step of the altar, and clothed in a loose drapery of black serge, with a burning taper in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, was Giovanni. His head was uncovered, and his loosened hair receiving, as it fell over his shoulders, the light of the taper, appeared like so much living gold.

His face was pale as moonshine; but in his heaven-fixed eyes there was a divine light, which rivetted those of Cesario.

At the proper summons Giovanni arose; and, having laid his sword upon

the altar, returned to his former position, while the customary exhortations and benedictions proceeded.

Cesario's heart meanwhile seemed palsied within him : he grew paler every instant ; he sat breathless and intent, forgetting every thing but the object of his immediate interest.

But when the majestic La Valette, rising, and approaching the still-kneeling Giovanni, addressed him, in a firm voice, with that solemn adjuration beginning, "Take this sword into your hand — by the clear and glittering blade it instructeth you to shine in faith," &c., Cesario felt as if an iron vail was then dropped between him and Giovanni. Such a pang accompanied this thought, that he groaned aloud, and startled those who sat near him.

Toledo gently touched him, and directed a meaning glance towards the door.

Cesario shook his head, and recollect-

ing where he was, looked down for some moments, till he believed he could command himself. His features meanwhile gradually composed ; yet every now and then Toledo heard him shudder convulsively, as if in an ague-fit.

Cesario was, indeed, paying the full penalty of all his past offences : he could not divest himself of the idea, that not even Giovanni could voluntarily prefer a life of constant self-sacrifice, and equally-diffused affections, to the charms of a free-will, and a heart pillowed on domestic love. He believed that his ingratitude had driven him to this ; and he fancied that in Giovanni's holy rapture, he saw the complete oblivion of his own repentant image.

There was bitterness insupportable in these ideas ; and not even the unobtrusive sympathy of Toledo, shown in the expressions of his amiable countenance, could divert him from them.

When the Grand Master had girded

the sword upon Giovanni's thigh, and received it from him again undrawn, he proceeded to lay it upon his shoulder, and declare him "A Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, in the Name of the Holy Trinity:" then, gently striking him on the cheek, he uttered these thrilling words,—"Rouse up your spirits, and dream no longer on this world's affairs."

Cesario started from his seat in a wild tumult of every feeling: his heart knocked violently against his breast, which he pressed with both hands, as if to still its intolerable motion. The whispering voice of Toledo recalled him a second time to recollection: he reseated himself while the Grand Master went on with his solemn appeal.

"Be watchful in the faith of Jesus Christ; and dispose yourself so, as if you were even at the last affront, and the very latest injury you were to receive in marching under the cross of our Lord."

Cesario now laboured and struggled with yet stronger emotion. The image that address presented, was Giovanni's bed of death; and whether on the field of honour, or in the solemn peace of his convent, that image was powerfully affecting.

Wilder ideas melted before it; and precipitating his face into his hands, he wept to suffocation. He neither saw the affixing of the spurs, nor heard the mass that was said immediately afterwards: he was roused a second time, only by the voice of Giovanni himself, replying to the injunctions and interrogatories of the Grand Master.

When that full and mellow voice repeated after La Valette the vows of obedience, chastity, and endurance of every danger and toil for the sake of the true faith, every note of it vibrated in the heart of Cesario. His tears flowed anew, but in a salutary stream of tender regret; and he secretly prayed Heaven to grant

him a glorious death in defence of that dear friend's life ; or, his pardon, and permission to embrace the same profession of arms and obedience.

When he looked up again, Giovanni was clothed in the black garment of the Order ; and having listened to the last explanations of the Grand Master respecting the various beatitudes, and received his instructions to pray for the souls of their deceased brethren, the ceremony would have ended, but La Valette, holding up the white subrevest with its scarlet cross, which the knights wear over their armour in battle, called on him to approach and receive it.

Placing it with his own hands on the body of Giovanni, he broke out in a strain of eloquence which roused every soul that heard him.

“ Now was the day of battle,” he said, “ when that garment should be worn ! The infidels were approaching, and every knight must so array himself, to give

them meeting like true champions of God and Christ. That garment must be their robe of triumph or their shroud."

He described the various miseries inflicted on the Christians by the impious race of Mahomet; the countries they ravaged; the multitudes they carried into captivity! He detailed the sufferings of their slaves; he reverted to the affronts the Order had received from them at so many different periods; and he called on every chevalier present, to draw forth his sword in the name of their patron-saint, and swear, with God's leave, never to sheathe it while a single enemy trod their shore.

At this call, every sword was drawn from its scabbard. The sound was like the rushing of winds, like the roar of waters, like the shout of distant multitudes.

The knights remained standing in respectful expectation, with their shining blades raised above their heads.

The pause was an impressive one. — La Valette then set the example, and with one movement they were all prostrate before the altar.

The Bishop of Malta now advanced to the front of the sanctuary to pronounce a benediction on their righteous purpose; but overcome with the sight of so many young and aged heads, bent down in Christian submission, so soon to be lifted up to meet the shock of war, and penetrated with a foreboding conviction of their danger, he attempted to speak, but could not: he then raised his eyes in mute prayer to Heaven, and extending his arms over the kneeling crowd, remained many minutes without moving.

His aged countenance was seen to change during that affecting interval, and his breast to heave; tears at length trickled down his furrowed cheek; when hastily retreating behind the altar, he dissolved the assembly.

CHAPTER XII.

CESARIO stood aloof with Don Felix, till the principal performers in this striking scene were out of the church; he then, in a voice of stifled emotion, besought his kind companion to bestow him somewhere remote from the quarters of Giovanni, whose recognition it was his duty to avoid, till he had redeemed his esteem by worthy action.

Toledo informed him that Signor Cigala's station was the Fort of St. Elmo, where he would most likely immediately take his post: that being the fort most exposed, yet most important for the defence of the island.

Toledo himself was just adopted into the squadron appointed to march round

the whole island, flying from point to point, menaced with a descent : this duty had the charm of constant action and enterprise ; and as such, was better suited to his home-divided mind, than one requiring the virtue of unsubmitting patience, united to those of valour and of skill. He advised Cesario to offer himself for the same service, proposing his immediate presentation to the Grand Master.

Cesario gladly accepted the offer, at the same time expressing his sense of this generous reliance upon the good faith of a stranger.

“ And what should I suspect you of ? ” demanded the frank-hearted Toledo ; “ there is nothing to be got here but hard blows, and perhaps, at last, empty stomachs : — men do not generally impose on others to get knocked on the head with them. ”

“ But there are such wretches as spies, — and perhaps private impulse should be checked, when public good — ”

“By the virgin, I never thought of that!” interrupted Toledo, stopping suddenly. Cesario’s dark eye smiled; Toledo’s reflected that amiable smile, and setting off again in a quicker pace, added, “Well, we’ll soon ascertain that,—and I’m not afraid of the trial. The governor will sift you to the utmost, in affront of that honesty of look which would give my heart the lie, if it were capable of harbouring one doubt of you.”

“Generous, generous Don Felix!” exclaimed Cesario aloud, and his secret soul added,—“but thou shalt never rival Giovanni.”

Toledo led him on to his own temporary residence in Il Borgo, where he left him to learn the Grand Master’s hour of leisure.

It was not long ere he returned, and then he brought the agreeable information of La Valette’s wish for the stranger’s immediate presentation. Ce-

sario arose, and followed his guide in silence. The interview with the Grand Master ended to the satisfaction of all parties: a letter from the Prince of Melfi, and the certificate of Cesario's rank in the Genoese navy, were sufficient credentials. La Valette assured him that his reputation had already reached Malta, making him wish that so brave a volunteer might find the fellowship of congenial spirits too precious to be resigned.

Cesario bowed, without other answer than what his eloquent eyes gave, for his heart was full: he thought of the ceremony he had just witnessed; and dared not foresee that time, and those events, which must appease his own self-abhorrence, ere he could solicit admission into an order which would give him equality once more with Giovanni.

The countenance of Toledo shone with benevolent pleasure, as he received La Valette's permission to present Cesario in his name to the commander Copier,

whose troop they were to join, with other volunteers, near the bay of Mugiario ; he then led his new associate to his own quarters till the morrow, when they were to set out.

“Now, then,” said Toledo, “here ends every thing about credulity and generosity, and so forth : henceforth we are yoke-fellows in war. You will fight to regain your friend’s heart, and I, to keep that of my wife. Can we have better inspiration?”

Cesario took the hand, then extended to him in the spirit of manly sincerity, and pressing it more than once very strongly, replied in the words of Sophocles,

“On, then! and like two lions in the field
Roaming for prey, guard we each other well.”

The short remainder of this day was employed in necessary arrangements; and the night they partly consumed in conversation.

Toledo enumerated the strangers who were come, like Cesario, to combat from a

merely chivalric spirit; and amongst these he mentioned two sons of the Prince of Melfi.

Cesario was pleased to learn that these were his old friends Marco, and Cynthio the fruitful source of all his brave father's cares.

Cynthio's appearance in the present scene seemed an earnest, or rather a proof of reformation from those destructive habits which find their full exercise in luxurious capitals only; and as such, Cesario felt his heart glow with joy for the excellent Doria, and with something of kindness towards the young man himself.

The conversation then turned naturally upon the early tie between Doria and the elder Adimari; this produced some description of the characters of each; which led Cesario insensibly into unrestrained discourse of his father.

Once more did he find an ear attentive to all he said upon that cherished sub-

ject; and while he spoke with humid eyes of his father's virtues and misfortunes, Toledo listened with that animated pleasure which warms us, when we have our best feelings called into action by the character or communications of our companions. Encouraged by the congeniality of their natures, he suffered himself to flow into confidence: he talked of his wife, of their days of courtship, and of all their hopes in the future.

“Ours was no common attachment!” he said, after having told his own romance by snatches. “You see it stood the test of four long years, and those dismally agitating ones. But fathers are not all indulgent and reasonable; and lovers rarely find out that they love one another till they have nearly brought each other to death's door. Perhaps Camilla and I relish our union the better for its long delay; yet, it is hard, too, to be cheated out of so much happiness! I'll show you a lock of her beautiful hair; she

gave it me the very day we parted last!"

He took from his vest a small embroidered case, as he spoke, and opening it, presented his companion with a set of ivory tablets. Between the two last leaves Cesario saw a very dark ringlet, lying in its natural and glossy curl; he admired it awhile; then turning his eye to the opposite leaf, where he observed written characters, asked with a smile, if he might read them.

"As you please," returned Toledo, looking down upon the hilt of his sword, and beginning to burnish it very busily with his glove.

The verses ran thus: —

"ON A LOCK OF HAIR.

"Go, envied, to my husband's breast,
And there with love and honour stay;
Oft wilt thou to his lips be pressed,
While I, alas, am far away!

"Should e'er unkindness start the tear,
Or cold neglect his bright eyes dim,

O, do thou bid him think of her
Who only lives to think of him."

"They are pretty good verses for a woman, are they not?" asked Toledo, his face crimsoning with a mixture of pleasure and confusion.

"I am no critic," replied Cesario, "and I like the sentiment of this little song too much to think whether it be well or ill expressed: but indeed ——," and then, of course, followed some good-natured encomiums upon the versification, &c.

Toledo affected the same indifference to these flattering remarks upon his wife's verses, as he would really have felt, had they been his own. Cesario, meanwhile, opened the tablets in another place, and recognising the same elegant characters, asked permission to go on.

Toledo hesitated, and glanced his eye upon the ivory page. "Shall I, or shall I not give you further licence?" he

asked ; his manly features coloured like those of a bashful girl. “ You’ll think me a fool and a coxcomb, perhaps, if I do. Well ! if a man is only proud of his wife’s attachment, and vain of its testimonials, there’s no great harm in it. This little book,” he continued, taking it in his hand, “ I won from her, after our marriage, with I don’t know how many fond oaths that no eye but mine should ever rest on it. See, how ill I keep my engagement!—but she knew my heart too well, to believe I could keep it ; and when she said so, I smiled ; and that smile absolves me I think. It was as good as a confession, that she guessed right. There, you may read one more.”

Cesario accepted the permission, and read these

“ LINES TO FELIX.

“ O WERE I thine—should I not be
Something at last, resembling thee?
For who may near sweet roses dwell,
Nor bear away their fragrant smell ?

And who shall place him in the sun,
Nor be like light to look upon ?
In those dear arms, beneath that eye,
Bosom'd in goodness should I lie ;
While in his eyes my eyes would look,
They'd read them like some holy book,
And learn the rapturous lesson there,
Of all that's excellent and rare :
Nay, e'en the beatings of his heart
Some answering virtue would impart,
And teach my heart the power to prove,
Of growing like the thing I love."

Cesario read these verses twice, and after the second reading shut the tablet with a sigh.

"Yes, faith, you've read quite enough!" cried Toledo, gaily snatching them, yet with a face all tenderness. "I hope you know how to make allowance for the enthusiasm of affection. Camilla has one of those true woman's hearts, which thinks the command to honour a husband as delightful as the impulse to love him; and so instead of persuading herself that I am an Adonis, (which by the way it would be difficult to do,) she

wisely gives her imagination the reins where it is not so easy to stop it, and erects me into a mirror of moral excellence. You'll allow that it is not my interest to undeceive her?"

Had Cesario looked on Toledo at that moment, he might have thought it required no stretch of fancy in his wife to find matchless beauty in a countenance bright with every noble and lovely expression.

But Cesario was lost in other thoughts : he was contrasting the verses just read, with many which he had himself inspired ; and the difference of their spirit struck him forcibly. Beatrice used to paint his outward graces in a variety of lights, and with a vivid pencil perhaps ; but he could not remember one stanza, where his nobler endowments were the subject, not one which was calculated to kindle in him an ambition to reach beyond what he was.

If Toledo (he thought) were not

already all that his wife described, her belief that he was so, must inspire him with the wish, and endue him with the power to realise her fancy.

Thus, then, the very partiality of such a woman tended to elevate her husband's character in this world, and to fit it for the next: while on the contrary, he whose best impulses were lulled into sleep by the sweet opiate of purely personal admiration, must soon sink into oblivion here, nor rise hereafter to the bliss and dignity of immortal beings.

"I am glad," he said, at length, "that you permitted me to read both these little poems; they give me so clear a view of Donna Camilla's character. When she writes but for herself, (as she certainly intended the last verses,) her innocent yet glowing affection is poured out without reserve; but when she writes that affection direct to her husband—even her husband!—how delicately restrained is the expression and the sentiment!

“This is indeed a heart to anchor a man’s soul upon.” Cesario said the last words with an air of complete abstraction ; for they belonged to a set of ideas which Camilla’s tender and modest character had called up ; and, absorbed in feelings past, hopes deceived, passions too skilfully played upon, he remained a long time silent. At length he shook off that selfish reverie, and asked Toledo what “unkindness” his wife alluded to in her first stanzas ? Could she dread it from the exemplary La Valette ?

“O none from him !” returned Toledo, hemming away a sigh, “but I was never a favourite with my father, and so forth ; and there was one subject upon which Camilla knew we should have frequent altercations ; and though it is a man’s duty to remonstrate with his parent, when he believes him influenced to do what is not right, he has always some filial qualms after it ; that is what she means. The tear, you know, is only a

poetical licence, — I am not given to weep.”

Cesario enquired no further, believing the subject he had unwarily touched upon too tender for continuance.

In truth, though not of the private nature he conjectured, it was one which pierced a son's jealous honour to the quick ; for it might possibly shade his father's reputation hereafter.

It related to the shameful counsels of Spain with regard to Malta ; and which, though Don Garcia di Toledo believed it his duty to obey, even while detesting them, his son, aware of the odium that must follow this desertion of a dependant and ally, thought his father's honour demanded the protest of dignified resistance.

He was therefore constant in his entreaty that his father would remonstrate more earnestly with their Royal master ; and rather resign the splendid post he held in Sicily, than purchase a conti-

nuance in it at the price of his reputation for good faith.

It was with these feelings, and from a fear that Don Garcia's ambition would not yield to a nobler love of distinction, that his son, whose integrity was firm as the rock he then trod, tore himself from the arms of domestic happiness, determined that he at least should live or die without the opprobrium of deserting the brave vanguard of Christendom.

Anxious, however, to give his parent the full measure of admiration due to him, Toledo was enlarging upon those military actions of his, which the historians of those days have recorded with such animation, when an unusual noise of steps and voices in the town made him start from his seat.

He ran to the window, and rushing back, caught up his sword, exclaiming, "I see the signal fire!—the enemy must be in sight."

Cesario sprang after him, and with so

eager a bound, that he got to the entrance of their abode at the same instant of time.

As they hurried into the open street, they saw the knights pouring from their different inns, half-attired, and tumultuously scaling the steep ascents to get a wider view of the surrounding scene.

A blaze of light in the direction of the road of Sirocco, was the signal Toledo mentioned: to that quarter all eyes were now directed. It flamed upwards with strong illumination, while all the other parts of the island lay in complete shadow.

Toledo hurried Cesario up with him to the ramparts of St. Angelo, where they stopped and looked round.

They saw the sea to the eastward covered with ships, extending as far as the eye could reach, and advancing with their lanthorns lighted, and all their sails set, before a steady breeze.

Toledo gazed on that formidable ar-

mada with dauntlessness and admiration.

“A gallant show, by heaven!” he exclaimed, turning to Cesario: the latter did not answer, but stood eagerly leaning forward, his kindling eyes fixed on the sublime scene exhibited on the ocean. It seemed as if he drank in draughts of ardor as he gazed; for his soul was indeed all roused within him; and, every selfish care forgot, he thought only of the great destruction for which this armada was prepared.

Toledo contemplated him awhile with a luminous look of sympathetic approbation; then, striking him on the shoulder, exclaimed, “Wake, my friend, from your trance! — wake, and let us run to realise all that you are dreaming of.”

Cesario turned on him the full light of an illuminated countenance; it was an eloquent illumination which Toledo’s reflected, and which rendered words unnecessary: indeed, for the next half hour,

as they hurried from St. Angelo to the residence of the Grand Master, and thence to the rendezvous of volunteers for their troop, they were quite unconscious that they conversed by the interchange of looks alone.

Meanwhile, the heavy tread of foot-soldiers, the clang of armour, the rattling noise of ordnance wheeling along the ramparts, the thundering close of gates, the erection of standards, the tumult of haste, and the rush of eagerness; the whole rock, in short, alive with men and movement, afforded a singular contrast to the majestic stillness and uniformity of the scene at sea. There, the white-winged vessels only differed from each other in magnitude; they were otherwise the same, advancing with equal order and steadiness over the level plain before them.

At the moment Cesario was marking this contrast in his own mind, La Valette passed in his hasty way to St. Angelo:

Toledo left his ranks to run after him a few paces.

The brave Governor turned round at his voice, and casting on him a look almost paternal, exclaimed, "My gallant hostage!" He strained him in his arms as he spoke; and his cheek, as it rested against that of the young warrior, made the other's moist.

"Back to your post!" he cried, releasing him. "With God's blessing, we shall meet again. Young man, your father must disperse that fleet, when once it has landed its host, and then our swords must do the rest."

Toledo waved his bright sword in token of his own loyal purpose, and fell back into the ranks.

"Let no one say that youth only is charming!" he said, turning to Cesario. "Can any countenance be more attractive than that of La Valette? What a picture does he make at this moment, with his gray hairs blowing in the wind,

and his eagle eye softening every time he stoops to embrace and bless his children! for we all think ourselves so.”

Cesario's eyes were rivetted on the same object with similar feelings. He watched the august La Valette as he went along, stopped every moment by knights hurrying to their posts, who would not depart without a hasty supplication for their Grand Master's benediction.

These intrepid chevaliers, kneeling for an instant with their helmets raised from their heads, then starting up, and darting away like so many flashes of light, seemed a distinct race of men, hitherto unknown by Cesario.

How could it be otherwise, when every countenance was irradiated by the sublimest enthusiasm!

He looked round; but Giovanni was no where to be seen! He looked then at the rocky point of Sceberras, and doubting not that his friend was already in the fortress there, he fervently prayed

that St. Elmo, at least, might be found impregnable.

The order to march terminated these reflections; when, giving a second wishful look to the embattled fort, and dreading to think whether it were in the decrees of Heaven that he and Giovanni should ever meet again, he turned away, resolute to deserve, if not to win such happiness.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHILE Cesario was rapidly approaching the enemy, Giovanni, unconscious of his proximity, was lending all the powers of his greatly-gifted mind to strengthen the different fortresses round the two ports.

He was equally skilled in the science of defence as in that of attack; for he had studied engineering with deep attention, and his suggestions had already improved and extended the fortifications round St. Angelo itself.

St. Elmo was originally built with the view of protecting Malta from attacks by sea, as it commanded the entrance of both the great and lesser ports; so that on that side it was deemed impregnable:

but on the land side, the defences were not so strong, nor indeed the ground favourable to their construction. But Giovanni, earnestly advising the addition of more efficient entrenchments, suggested several new ideas, inspired by a genius which seized capabilities hitherto unobserved, and triumphed over obstacles always believed invincible.

He was the first to imagine the probability of an attack being made upon St. Elmo by land ; urging the certainty of the Turkish army's advance in its rear, while their ships of war would beleaguer it in front.

The event fulfilled his prediction. Their fleet, taking advantage of a dark night, landed the troops in a bay to the eastward, whence they spread themselves over the country between that and St. Catharine's, pillaging and massacring all who offered resistance.

The path of these formidable infidels was to be tracked in the blood of the

peasantry, and the ashes of the surrounding villages. At first they seemed irresolute whether to fall at once upon the ancient capital, and so cut off the supplies of the different garrisons, or to invest St. Angelo and Il Borgo, or to attack St. Elmo.

They suddenly determined upon the last enterprise, believing St. Elmo's command of the two entrances rendered it the most important object; and flattering themselves that it could not hold out above a few days.

In this belief they marched straight from St. Catharine's to Mount Sceberras, where they established their camp, and began to trace their lines.

It was during the rapid and destructive march of this army, that Giovanni first heard of Cesario: he heard of him as the foremost and the bravest of that gallant troop, that handful of heroes, who were the first to brave death in opposition to those locusts of the East.

This troop, taking advantage of the local circumstances of ground and time, though consisting but of three hundred men (principally peasants), watched the motions of the enemy, hung upon their rear, and, falling upon their straggling parties, cut off their return to the main body.

It is true, half his own number fell in these bold skirmishes; but he attained his object of retarding the progress of the infidels, and therefore his followers deemed their own blood cheaply spilt.

When the Turkish army encamped on Mount Sceberras, this troop was recalled, and the survivors distributed amongst the stationary posts.

The joyful thrill which shot through Giovanni's veins, when he first heard that Cesario was in the same island with him, and had already distinguished himself beyond his brave associates, — that joyful thrill told him the indestructibility of his friendship.

Many a romantic possibility passed in a moment through his mind, each tending to exalt the character of Cesario, to prove his repentance, and to make it virtue in Giovanni to open his arms to him once more.

No one saw the tear which Giovanni turned aside to brush off, as the fearless enterprises of this cherished friend were related to him as a matter of mere talk by the Chevalier de la Cerda. His heart throbbed in silence: for, except towards Cesario, Giovanni had never felt an uncontrollable impulse to pour out its most tumultuous feelings, save at the foot of the Cross.

To look into the future, and imagine a moment in which he might claim his friend again without shame; that friend proved by time and trial; and, by such means, justly restored in his own opinion to that precious feeling of equality without which there is no friendship; — to imagine this, was to console himself for

the past, and to animate him through the present.

He felt the blessing of such a prospect; and, looking up to heaven, he ejaculated a fervent thanksgiving.

He withdrew his eyes, to fix them, with his disciplined thoughts, upon the formidable scene below.

He was standing with De la Cerda in a redoubt flanking one of the entrenchments of St. Elmo, and from this point he took in the full sweep of the enemy's lines.

Giovanni had not been in the fortress since his first observation of its deficiencies and capabilities; and he was but now returned from visits of a similar kind. He saw with astonishment the camp of Mustapha extending over the whole of the mountain: it followed its abrupt declivities, and was defended by huge mortar batteries.

Every where pioneers and soldiers were at work, in cutting trenches, rearing pa-

rallels, and preparing all things for a final escalade.

Meanwhile St. Elmo thundered upon them with all her guns ; but, though the Turks fell in numbers, others immediately supplied their places.

Giovanni turned his eyes from that enormous camp, first to St. Elmo, and then to an eminence since called Dragut's Point, which runs parallel with Mount Sceberras, on the other side of the lesser port. A battery erected on that point might actually enfilade the fort : it was therefore a highly important station ; and his quick glance had formerly taken in all its capacity of annoyance.

He started now to see it had not been secured. He did not speak, but he looked again on St. Elmo.

The steep rock on which it stood, (the very pinnacle of Sceberras,) was so narrow, that at best it did not afford room for fortifications, however well-conceived, of any extent. Thus the safety of the place must entirely depend upon the resolution

of its defenders ; for if the Turks were able to complete the numerous batteries which they were now constructing before the Spaniards should arrive, they would soon batter down the fort itself, and leave but a naked station to be contested at the point of the sword, and won by the fall of the last knight.

“ So shall it be won, if it ever be won,” said Giovanni internally ; and he turned away from De la Cerda, to seek the governor Dueguerras, and to urge the necessity of immediately erecting a ravelin upon the rampart facing Cape Dragut.

The whistling of bullets through the stillest air imaginable, was the only sound heard around him as he ascended the rocky steps of the fortress ; but Giovanni heard it not, for he was familiarised to its deadly whisper, and intent upon his own thoughts. Yet is that single sound enough to chill the stoutest heart : the clash of sabres, and the roar of cannon,

are not half so appalling, for there is something rousing and inspiring in loud sounds; but the low, rushing whir of bullets is so traiterously disproportionate to the fatal certainty of the death they carry, that it resembles in effect the cautious tread of a midnight murderer.

Whoever has once heard that sound, can never forget the horrible seizure of the moment in which it first struck his ear. Yet there has existed a warrior who exclaimed upon such an occasion, "Henceforth this is my music!"

On reaching the Governor, Giovanni ventured modestly, but firmly, to repeat his ideas of the neglected station on the other side of the port; offering, if Dueguerras would give him leave, and supply him with means, to cross the bay with a few other knights, and establish himself on the point ere the enemy could seize it.

Afraid of weakening his garrison, (which did not indeed exceed two hundred men, including serving brothers and soldiers,)

Dueguerras excused himself from following this judicious counsel, alleging that reason ; and assuring Giovanni, that the Viceroy of Sicily with his fleet of transports and ships of war, and Prince Doria, with the gallies of the republic, would appear off the island, even before the enemy could make a single lodgment in their covert way.

Giovanni shook his head. —

“ You doubt the Viceroy’s sincerity !” asked the sanguine, therefore credulous old warrior. “ It has ever been my opinion,” replied Giovanni, “ that what a man intends to do, he does as promptly as possible. Will is always accompanied by action. The Viceroy promises and apologises ; explains and promises again ; again disappoints and again explains. Except his brave and open-hearted son, not a single man has he lent to our cause. Facts speak with the tongues of angels, my honoured Sir.”

“ But you know that a great convoy

of ships; and troops, and stores, are not moved by the act of one will, as a man marches his own body?" said Dueguerras, smiling in obstinate but good-humoured disbelief; "and it is so much the interest of Spain to preserve us, (for are we not the very outpost of her Italian possessions?) that, putting aside all the obligations of honour and gratitude, this consideration alone makes it absurd to doubt the intentions of the Spaniards."

Again Giovanni shook his head, and said earnestly, "We must judge of a man's probable conduct, not by our own measure of reasonableness, but by his. Philip's policy is notoriously narrow and selfish; and the noble Toledo must be guided by it. I am convinced that the inclinations of the latter are to bring his whole force directly to the aid of the Grand Master. His son's character and conduct are my warrant for this; nay, his very presence here is convincing. But if Philip fancies that the ships and

troops under the governors of Tripoli and Algiers, which are said to be expected by yonder host, are to be employed against Sicily, when deserted by her Viceroy and fleet, is it not quite in the nature of his short-sighted policy, to leave Malta to her own resources? and must not his Viceroy obey the harsh command, however unwillingly."

"Then why not say so? — why heap promise upon promise?"

"Because it is Philip's interest to support our spirits with hope," was Giovanni's remark, with a sigh at Dueguerras' pernicious dependence.

He then resumed his entreaties for permission to attempt securing the position on the adjacent eminence; but finding no arguments available against the Governor's fear of weakening his garrison, he suggested the idea of the ravelin, and went away, rejoiced that at least on that subject his representations were to be attended to.

From this moment the operations of the Turks proceeded with such rapidity, that, in less than five days from their landing, they had brought their artillery to the very foot of St. Elmo, raised their platforms and gabions, and opened a terrible fire from a battery of cannon, charged with bullets of stone.

At every shock of this tremendous battery, some part of the fort fell in ruins over its defenders in the trenches. The Turks shot at a single and fixed mark, while the besieged had to scatter their fire over so much ground, and so many objects, that the destruction, though great in reality, was comparatively small.

It was evident that unless the Sicilian succours arrived to raise the siege, by blocking up the Turkish fleet in the bay of Mugiario, and attacking their camp in the rear, the fort must soon be reduced to dust. Thus would fall the actual key of the island; after that, nothing

would obstruct their entrance into both the great and lesser port, and the reduction of the inner fortresses could not then be the work of many more days.

Anxious to preserve his position to the last, and confident only in the bulwark of dauntless souls, Dueguerras deputed De la Cerda to go and solicit a reinforcement from the Grand Master at St. Angelo. Unhappily for the reputation of all within St. Elmo, De la Cerda was the only one of that garrison whose valour could not stand the test of extraordinary danger. Terrified by some hideous cruelties already exercised by the enemy on their prisoners, he went beyond his commission; and though he could not paint in too strong colours the desperate state of St. Elmo, nor exaggerate the imminent danger of its garrison, he misrepresented their inextinguishable spirit.

He described their alarming diminution of numbers, in consequence of their perpetual exposure to the fire of the

enemy, and the intense heats of the weather; and he asserted that they were so dismayed by their hourly losses, and by the growing strength of their adversary, that he was convinced they would not hold out above six days longer.

La Valette was seated in the midst of the knights belonging to the posts of St. Angelo and Castile, when De la Cerda made this imprudent assertion; he started up in a flame of virtuous indignation:—
“These are not the sentiments of the veteran Dueguerras!” he exclaimed; “and if they are those of the boys unworthy his command, (for I will not call such timid soldiers men,) it is time their places should be filled with others of nobler metal. I will throw myself into St. Elmo, and bury these bones under its ruins, rather than live to see it in the power of infidels. Shame on the knight who would consent to quit it a living man, when the crescent should supplant the Cross!”

La Valette had scarcely spoken, when a crowd of warriors pressed round him, deprecating his departure from St. Angelo, the citadel of the island, for what they termed an outpost like St. Elmo. Each brave spirit demanded leave to join the garrison of that fort; and, after a short but lively contest of self-devotion, it was determined that two experienced chevaliers should lead some companies of foot, together with a certain number of knights and a party of the lately-arrived volunteers from foreign countries, to its support.

Amongst the first who offered themselves, were Toledo and Cesario; the former burning to atone with his life, if that were necessary, for his father's forced delay; and the other thirsting to draw nearer Giovanni, and court some blessed chance of shielding that precious head in the peril of the expected assault.

But La Valette, putting Cesario back with his hand, accompanied with a glance

of his powerful eye, said in a low tone, "I have other work for you, Adimari; wait till I can tell you what!" — turned to Toledo, and gently delivered his reasons for wishing to retain him near his own person.

These reasons were of a nature too flattering to Toledo's affection for the Gránd Master, not to silence him, however reluctantly; and laying his hand on his breast, where there were yet-gaping wounds got in the late skirmishes, to bear witness of his truth, he turned to embrace with a cordial farewell, some of his departing associates.

Meanwhile La Valette walked aside with Cesario, to whom he spoke of his uneasiness at the protracted delays of Toledo's father; and asked if he would undertake the dangerous service of getting out of port, with his nephew the Chevalier La Valette, whom he meant to send at any risk to Sicily.

His nephew was an indifferent sailor, though a brave soldier; and Cesario's nautical experience, in case of any accident, would be inestimable.

Besides which, if Prince Doria were in the harbour of Messina, Cesario might either induce him to sail without waiting for the Sicilian fleet, or learn to a certainty the intentions of the Seigniory.

When Cesario obeyed the motion of La Valette's arm, as it gently restrained his impetuous action of entreaty when the reinforcement of St. Elmo was discussing, he resolved that nothing should put him from his purpose of becoming one of the garrison; but this appeal was conclusive: he knew his own influence over the worthy Doria to be greater than that of his son's now at Malta, and he knew still better his own ardent zeal.

Doria must have great weight with the crown of Spain; perhaps the existence of Malta might depend upon Cesario's consent or refusal to make this desperate

voyage! — perhaps it would be his proud destiny to speed those succours which were to save St. Elmo! — perhaps this service might be deemed enough by Giovanni to warrant him in renewing their league of soul.

What agitating, what animating possibilities! Ought he to renounce them? — ought he, in short, to give up so great a public duty for the indulgence of any private feeling?

He looked on Toledo, whose whole countenance was at that moment in a glow of generous ardour, but whose secret affections were, he well knew, with his young bride; the view stung him into noble emulation. He replied to the Grand Master at once; accepted the service; thanked him for the enviable distinction it conferred; and, receiving his further instructions to conceal his intended voyage from Don Felix, lest it should wound his sensitive honour, he left the council-hall.

That very evening, while the cannon of St. Angelo were covering the short but perilous passage of the reinforcements across the great port, a ball struck the Turkish General, and for several hours threw such consternation among the enemy, that Cesario believed this the favourable moment for getting out to sea. He threw himself, with Henri La Valette, into the galliot destined for them ; and, favoured by the darkness of night, which nothing illuminated but incessant flashes from the guns of the castle, steered safely out of harbour.

Cesario looked up to St. Elmo, as they doubled the point on which it stood ; the fort was scarcely distinguishable from that black and frowning rock ; and on the-sea side all was still : but the roar of artillery behind it, and in front of the Turkish camp, convinced him that the work of death was going on.—Giovanni ! Where was he ? Every thundering ex-

plosion which shook the shores and the sea, might carry his fate with it!

This was not a thought to be dwelt on by the man whom duty forbade to share such danger with his friend: he wrested his mind resolutely from it; and commending that dearly-loved friend to the protection of Heaven and his own nobleness, took the helm of the galley, and turned her head towards Sicily.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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